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ABSTRACT

In June 1992, a General Education Task Force was established at George Brown College (GBC) in Ontario, Canada, to develop a philosophy statement on general education (GE), curriculum guidelines, a GE course approval and review process, and an implementation plan regarding GE at the college. This interim report describes the context of and actions taken by the task force in its first year of operation. First, the task force's approach to their mission is described, highlighting the following actions: (1) research was conducted in areas related to province-wide policies, the history of GE, curriculum development, and the work of other task forces in Ontario colleges; (2) four subcommittees were established to work on educational philosophy, curriculum, implementation, and generic skills; (3) guest speakers were invited to address related topics; (4) presentations were made to college committees and departments; (5) a consultant was hired to develop an inventory of vocational, GE, and generic skills courses for all post-secondary programs at the college. Next, the historical context of GE in Ontario and at GBC is described and an overview of educational issues related to GE is provided. A profile of GBC programs is then provided, including data on the percentage of GE courses to total courses at GBC, and recommendations for specific curriculum areas are listed, providing detailed implementation guidelines. The final section describes future task force plans. Appendixes document Task Force activities, and include a Generic Skills Subcommittee report. (PAA)

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GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE

INTERIM REPORT

TO THE

ACADEMIC PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

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GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE

APRIL 1993

JC 930 448

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THE GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE
PROGRESS REPORT

I. INTRODUCTION

In April 1992, the co-chairs of the General Education Task Force submitted a proposal on mandate, structure and membership for approval to the Academic Plan Steering Committee. The Task Force itself was formally constituted in June 1992 as one of the four Task Forces of the Academic Plan Steering Committee.

THE FORCE

Membership on the Task Force represents a broad cross-section of the college and has expanded since its inception as a result of interested individuals requesting to join or of the emerging work of the group. The following college members constituted the Task Force as of March 15, 1993. An asterisk identifies those who have been serving on the Task Force since September 1992 when the main work of the Task Force got underway.

Bob Banks, Technician, Math and Science
Anne Carr, Chair, Business Administration *
Karen Chandler, Faculty, Early Childhood Education
Lucy D'archangelo, English and Liberal Studies
Fran Dungey, Human Resources
Dorothy Ellis, Chair, Hospitality *
Bruno Fullone, Faculty, Math and Science
Marilyn Grant, Faculty, Nursing *
Roger Grewal, Faculty, Technology *
Maureen Hynes, Coordinator, School of Labour *
Kay Kazuba, Faculty, Fashion Technology *
John King, Faculty, Graphic Arts
Fred Knittel, Faculty, Fashion Technology
Louise Kruithof, Chair, Architectural Engineering *
Ed Ksenych, Coordinator, Liberal Studies * (Task Force Co-chair)
Peter Lovrick, Faculty, English and Liberal Studies
Bob Luker, Faculty, Community Worker *
Jo Ann Mastrotucci, Student, Community Services *
Marcia Pullybank, Library Services*
Susan Sheehan, Coordinator, Office Administration *
Marianne Taylor, Faculty, English and Liberal Studies
and College Council Chair * (Task Force Co-chair)
Gary Waters, Faculty, Science and Technology *
Hilde Zimmer, Coordinator, Women in Trades and Technology *

THE TASK

The mandate of the General Education Task Force was to research, develop and recommend a general education policy for George Brown College in accordance with the guidelines and recommendations of VISION 2000 and CSAC (Appendix A).

Specifically, the Task Force members agreed to develop

- a philosophy statement on general education,
- post-secondary general education curriculum guidelines,
- a general education course approval and review process, and
- an implementation plan regarding general education for the college.

In January 1993, the Academic Plan Steering Committee directed that similar work on generic skills be handled by a Subcommittee of this Task Force in collaboration with representatives from the other Task Forces.

TASK FORCE STRUCTURE AND OPERATION

It was agreed from the outset the Task Force would be open, democratic and collaborative in its operation and that members would be expected to do background reading, research and subcommittee work.

At a later date, all members of the college community were invited, through an open letter to the college community (Appendix B), to make written submissions, actively participate in the Task Force or attend meetings as a guest. Consequently, new members joined the Task Force.

As the work of the Task Force evolved, the members further refined and adopted the following working principles to guide the group in its research, deliberations and development of recommendations:

1. developing a general education curriculum that benefits the college and its members as a whole rather than any particular sector;

2. developing a general education curriculum that is informed by the educational discussion, theory and research on general education;

3. formulating, collaboratively, a general education and generic skills curriculum;

4. maintaining the integrity of programs and of general education;

5. advocating that the educational, social and economic opportunities afforded by a general education component be available to all college students, including those in non-post-secondary programs;

6. making use of the distinctive strengths of the college community in developing and delivering a general education curriculum, including

    a) the colleges' longstanding emphasis on teaching and attentiveness to student needs and interests,
    b) a respect for the traditions and general contributions of our professions and trades,
    c) involving those who are interested and who have, or seek to expand, their general education background in the promotion or delivery of general education;

7. minimizing job disruption and preventing job loss while incorporating the increased emphasis on general education and generic skills within college programs; and

8. maximizing the opportunities offered by this curriculum change for faculty growth and program review.

The members agreed early on that in order to accomplish the scope of their task, they would need to

a) become familiar in an ongoing way with some of the background documents, research, theory and range of interests concerning general education;

b) consult with a variety of resource persons both within and outside the college system;

c) gain a clearer picture of the nature and degree of general education and generic skills training in the college;

d) report on its evolving work to the college community as well as to other colleges engaged in similar activities; and

e) break its work down into manageable parts.

As a result, the group

a) undertook a program of researching into areas related to Ministry documents and policies, the history of general education in post-secondary education, the philosophy and definition of general education, curriculum development and the work of other General Education Task Forces in Ontario colleges;

b) established three standing subcommittees to work on philosophy, curriculum and implementation in the Fall 1992. A fourth subcommittee on generic skills was established in February 1993, with five component focus groups to deal with each of the generic skills areas of analytic reasoning, communication, computer literacy, interpersonal skills and numeracy;

c) invited a series of guest speakers (Appendix C) and encouraged its members to consult resource people inside and outside the college (Appendix D) on topics and issues related to the above areas;

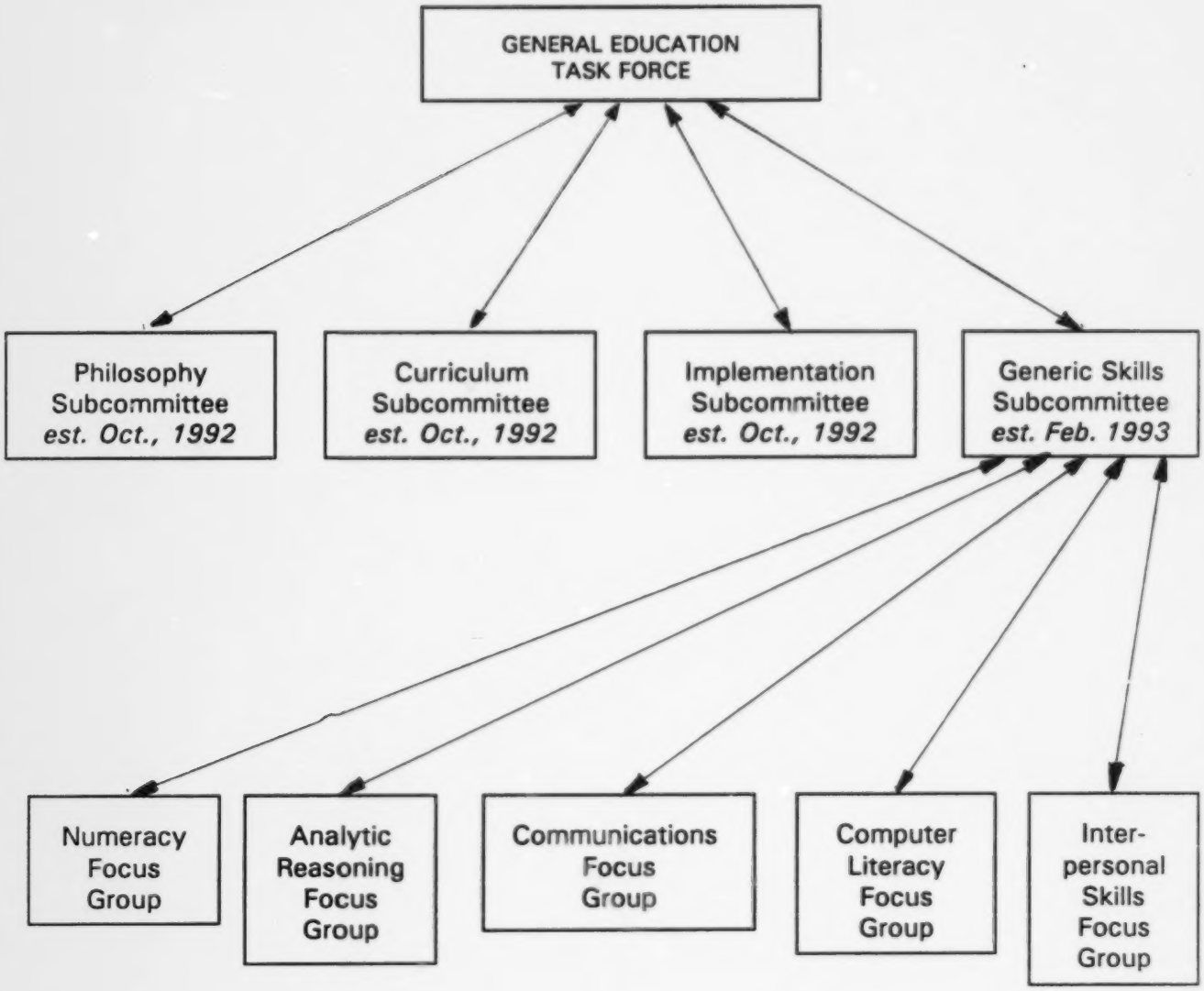
d) made presentations on the nature and work of the Task Force to college committees and departments, when requested, as well as at intercollege meetings (Appendix E); and

e) hired a consultant to make an inventory of vocational, general education and generic skills courses for all post-secondary programs across the college.

Finally, the members also recognized that investigating and developing even provisional educational philosophy, curriculum, organizational structures and an implementation plan for general education would require the Task Force's work to be highly process- as well as product-oriented, and that maintaining the integrity of this process would require time for research, consultation, reflection, group discussion and consensus building.

Given the realities of time constraints and resource limitations, the Task Force members decided in December 1992, in consultation with the Academic Plan Steering Committee, that they would submit only an Interim Report for April 1993. This would also provide some room for the Generic Skills Subcommittee to pursue its work given the late date that it was constituted.

GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE STRUCTURE


GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE
Philosophy Subcommittee est. Oct., 1992
Curriculum Subcommittee est. Oct., 1992
Implementation Subcommittee est. Oct., 1992
Generic Skills Subcommittee est. Feb. 1993
Numeracy Focus Group
Analytic Reasoning Focus Group
Communications Focus Group
Computer Literacy Focus Group
Inter-personal Skills Focus Group

II. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The work of the General Education Task Force has taken place within an historical, educational and socio-economic context. The nature and scope of its work, the particular issues and problems it faced and its recommendations are best understood and assessed if considered in light of these conditions and events.

GENERAL EDUCATION IN THE COLLEGE SYSTEM IN ONTARIO

Some of the important factors which have impacted on general education in the Province are the following:

(A) The Original Mandate

Initially, the community colleges were expected to meet a provincial guideline that program curriculum be approximately one-third general education and two-thirds vocational studies.[1]

However, because the definition and purpose of general education were the subject of debate, disagreement and confusion, colleges differed widely in their response to the guideline.

(B) Program Curriculum Development

The decision-making process in the colleges relating to curriculum is often not widely representative of all stakeholders. Program curriculum has been shaped primarily by advisory committees, often comprised of industry-based rather than broadly-based membership. This can result in giving attention to occupational training considerations at the expense of the general education and generic skills curriculum components.

In addition, standing departmental or program curriculum committees, which could provide a local forum for faculty to address educational issues related to program and course development and review, are not a standard structure in departments across the system.

[1] "Guidelines for Development of Curricula in Ontario Community Colleges", 1968

(C) Fiscal Reductions

Years of funding cutbacks have led to ongoing program hour reductions. Decreased hours for program delivery have, in turn, put pressure on general education courses to increasingly assume a role in providing vocational instruction or even to be sacrificed to make room for needed vocational courses.

(D) Delivery Arrangements

In many of the colleges, general education and generic skills courses have been taught by faculty who were attached to a vocational division. These conditions contributed to the production of a multiplicity of diversely conceived general education courses, many highly tailored to the needs of a particular occupational area.

The ambiguity about the meaning and goals of general education, the pressure to meet occupational training requirements and dwindling fiscal resources have caused significant erosion of the general education component.

These factors have also had the effect of substantially varying the courses, content, (including general education and generic skills components) and even the lengths, of vocationally similar programs from college to college.

More recently, the process of renewing the college system through VISION 2000 and CSAC, has significantly and decisively affected general education and generic skills.

(E) The Renewed Mandate: Vision 2000

In 1990, Vision 2000 renewed the commitment to a broadened career-oriented college education "to enable students to realize their personal and career goals"[2]. The call for the renewal was made almost unanimously by a broad range of sectors of our society: business, industry, education and labour, including OPSEU.[3]

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[2] "Vision 2000", p. 36.

[3] Ibid.

Recommendation two called for an increase in the generic skills and general education program content to "ensure an equivalence of learning outcomes between these components and specific vocational outcomes"[4].

A change of this kind was seen to mean a fundamental reorienting of the curriculum. The individual colleges were left to find ways to solve the organizational and delivery questions.

An effort was made to resolve the definition debate by clarifying the meaning of and distinguishing between general education and generic skills.

Visicn 2000 defined ***general education*** as:

"the broad study of subjects and issues which are central to education for life in our culture. Centred in, but not restricted to, the arts, sciences, literature and humanities, general education encourages students to know and understand themselves, their society and institutions, and their roles and responsibilities as citizens."[5]

General education courses are described as avocational, content-focused, and typically delivered in discrete courses.

Generic skills are defined as:

"practical life skills essential for both personal and career success. They include language and communication skills, math skills, learning and thinking skills, interpersonal skills, and basic technological literacy. They are not job specific, but are crucial to mastering changing technologies, changing environments and changing jobs....Facility in some generic skills - reading, listening, writing, learning - is a prerequisite for success in most college-level courses."[6]

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[4]Ibid., p. 38.

[5]Ibid. p. 35.

[6]Ibid., p. 35.

Generic skills "place primary emphasis on "how to" skills"[7] and may be taught either in dedicated courses (e.g., a course on report writing) or integrated into other courses (e.g., as a requirement for regular written work in a general business course).

Strengthening the general education and generic skills components of a career education was seen to ensure that students are provided with expanded personal and employment opportunities and choices and that the communities in which they live are benefited.

(F) The CSAC Establishment Board Report

In 1992, the CSAC Establishment Board's Report, expanding on the work of Vision 2000, made several specific recommendations relating to ***general education***: (The recommendations of the Establishment Board were approved by the government in February 1993, and steps are currently being taken to constitute the Council for Standards and Accreditation [CSAC].)

(i) CSAC will have the responsibility for defining the goals of general education; these will be expressed as benefits to the student's personal growth, citizenship and working life.[8]

(ii) When established, CSAC will give further definition and direction for general education by identifying broad content areas and broad objectives for those areas. These broad content areas will constitute a framework for general education courses.[9]

(iii) Each college will have the responsibility for developing the specific learning outcomes for general education courses in its curriculum.

This is to avoid having CSAC prescribe curriculum and to ensure the commitment of each college to implementing the general education requirement.

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[7]Park, "Expanding the Core", p. 2.

[8]"The Report of the CSAC Establishment Board", 1992, p. 21.

[9]Ibid., p. 22.

(iv) Because general education is to be broadening and avocational, general education offerings should be developed so that they provide "a breadth of content areas"[10].

(v) If feasible, general education courses should be in an elective format so that students can choose the course they prefer.[11]

(vi) CSAC will be mandated to set timelines for implementing general education.[12]

By September 1994, post-secondary programs must include, on average, three hours per week for each semester (approximately a 45 hour course) of general education. Additional funding will not be provided for implementing this requirement.[13]

This recommendation for one course per semester was made based on system-wide studies which indicated that, on average, in the colleges, about 13% of program hours are for general education. Consequently, the requirement was seen to be reasonable given current funding.

(vi) An additional general education requirement will be implemented by adding program hours and funded, three to five years after the introduction of the first requirement.[14]

(vii) A General Education Council will be built into the CSAC structure to further develop the curriculum framework and goals and establish a review process.[15]

The Establishment Board also made several recommendations relating to generic skills:

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[10]Ibid., p. 23.

[11]Ibid., p. 23.

[12]Ibid., p. 23.

[13]Ibid., p. 24.

[14]ibid., p. 23.

[15]Ibid. p. 35.

(a) Generic skills learning outcomes for each level will be developed by CSAC for the five skill areas: communications, numeracy, interpersonal relations, analytical reasoning and computer literacy.[16]

(b) It is the responsibility of each college to ensure that students meet the outcomes requirements for generic skills proficiency in each program. However, CSAC may occasionally conduct a random test to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in ensuring that its graduates acquire the skills.[17]

It was the expectation of the Establishment Board that generic skills, by and large, would be integrated throughout the curriculum; nevertheless, some generic skills content may be delivered as discrete courses.[18]

(c) A Generic Skills Council will be established as part of CSAC to define generic skills outcomes and develop a student assessment and review process for each skill area.[19]

GENERAL EDUCATION AND GENERIC SKILLS AT GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE

Historically, the same confusion which characterized the larger college system about the courses, content and goals of general education has existed at George Brown College.

Ambiguous Language

Characteristically, any course which was not clearly vocational in content has been called general education. E.g., courses as variable as communications, maths, human relations, small business management and introductory psychology have all been identified as general education.

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[16] Ibid., p. 16.

[17] Ibid., p. 30.

[18] Ibid., p. 17.

[19] Ibid., p. 35.

Vocationalization

The general education inventory undertaken by the Task Force consultant, Barry Kaplan, reveals that a large proportion of general education at the college tends to be vocationally oriented, i.e. tailored to support the occupational area. (See Section 4, Table 1.)

Organizational Arrangements

Until very recently, the departments that were primary deliverers of the general education courses were called "service" or "support" departments. Their courses have tended to be seen as supports to the vocational component. As a case in point, course outlines prepared by general education and generic skills departments were subject to an approval process and signed by the "client" division. College program approval mechanisms paid scant attention to general education program components, in part because approval committees did not require representation from a general education area. In a sense, because general education was thought to be everyone's concern, in effect, it became no one's concern. These organizational arrangements and relationships reflect the understanding which has predominated at the college about the status, role and goals of general education. It should be noted that significant changes are underway in the college to correct some of the imbalance which existed in the past.

III. OVERVIEW OF THE EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

General Education has not just been a topic in the Ontario college system. It has been at the centre of an ongoing debate within post-secondary education across North America for a number of decades. As with many issues, the issue of general education is multifaceted and actually encompasses a number of distinct, though related, concerns and questions.

The following is an introductory overview of some key educational questions that have framed the broader discussion over general education in post-secondary education, and the work of the Task Force.

Although there may be a predisposition to regard such questions as academic debates, it has been the experience of this Task Force that they are very real both in their nature and consequences, and that any proposals for a general education curriculum, including those against, will need to take a position, either explicitly or implicitly, on

them. It is our suggestion that the position be a broadly considered one which involves contributions from the various stakeholders involved in college education, and takes into account both the students' and the community's immediate and longterm interests.

IS THERE A ROLE FOR GENERAL EDUCATION?

One aspect of the discussion over general education has been over whether it has any necessary and desirable role to play in the education of individuals for life in a modern industrial, capitalist democracy.

Debate over the role of general education, broadly understood at this point as liberal arts and science education, intensified during the 1960's and 1970's over whether or not to deliberately expand liberal arts and sciences within North American post-secondary education curricula. On the one hand, proponents argued that liberal arts and sciences provide an historical and value context for specialized learning, and that they assist students in developing a relationship to the communities in which they live that offsets the self-preoccupation which often results within an individualistic, competitive culture.[20]

Opponents countered that it is difficult to explain what such an education is or describe its benefits because general education is really a curriculum for inculcating the particular value system, almost akin to a religion, of a smug, intellectual ruling class, and that the goals of broadening and of developing mental discipline can be met through studying pragmatic subjects immediately relevant to an individual's career.[21]

The debate resurfaced in the late 1980's in the United States with two widely-read educational books, E. D. Hirsch's Cultural Literacy[22] and Allan Bloom's The Closing of the American Mind[23]

Using a wide range of familiar examples as well as systematic research, Hirsch proposed that individuals need to possess some basic "cultural information" and

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[20]John Sawhill, from *The Unlettered University* as reprinted in Harper's Magazine, February, 1979.

[21]Caroline Bird, "Liberal Arts are the Religion of the Ruling Class", from *The Case Against College*, McKay, 1975.

[22]E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Cultural Literacy, Randon House/Vintage, 1987.

[23]Allan Bloom, The Closing of the American Mind, Simon and Schuster, 1987.

general knowledge in order to function and communicate effectively in the modern world. However, American schooling has been based on educational theories that claim educational development should not be tied to specific content, and so, has failed to transmit this broad background information. This has helped to create a situation where citizens are unable to communicate well or understand one another when called to discuss community and national issues.

Bloom's book highlights that post-secondary education has responded to the growth of specialization and the demand to give equal status to everything, by abandoning the need to provide students with any sense of unity and hierarchy to knowledge. One consequence is that the traditional aims of higher education are no longer pursued or even discussed. In the absence of any agreement or discussion over goals, curriculum becomes decided by popularity, immediate relevance, or at best, a principle of tolerance among differences, with "each field respecting the rights and dignity of the other",[24] at the expense of discussing and cultivating a knowledge of what is significant.

Both of these educators have drawn a great deal of criticism. Hirsch has been challenged over who decides what every literate person should know and over what counts as basic cultural information. Bloom has been criticized for an elitist interpretation of traditional education and of the current efforts to democratize learning. As one reviewer points out, a democratic orientation to education which integrates the aims of liberal education with an attention to the more practical requirements of life in a society has also been part of our educational roots, and such an education represents a viable alterative to Bloom's views on post-secondary learning.[25]

A comparable discussion has been taking place over the last three decades in Canada although it has focused more on the relationship between education and technology, notably on preparing individuals for a technologically-driven society and on the rise of instrumental approaches to education within our schools. The problem, as formulated by George Grant, concerns the increasing application of technical reasoning, with its separation of factual from moral considerations, to all areas of human endeavour, and the effects this has in the schools and on society.[26] One consequence of the growing emphasis on technique in education has been an increasing preoccupation

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[24]Allan Bloom, Giants and Dwarfs, Simon and Schuster, 1991: 352.

[25]Martha Nussbaum "Undemocratic Vistas", New York Review of Books, Nov. 5, 1987.

[26]George Grant, Technology and Empire, Anansi Press, 1969.

with skills, including the emergence of "generic skills", and an evasion of the difficult task of teaching students to engage material in terms of its substance and human content.[27]

Finally, there is a view that is occasionally presented which points out that there is no conclusive evidence that a liberal or general eduction actually has any beneficial effect on the lives of students. However, it is not clear why its proponents have chosen to make this interesting point only with regard to general education. As one well-known survey of the research found, there is surprisingly little evidence which actually demonstrates that vocational education is necessary for preparing individuals for jobs.[28] Much of the data presented in this survey suggests that the distinctive contribution of post-secondary education has to do with the significance of the credential bestowed, rather than occupational knowledge and skills, most of which can be, and are, learned at the workplace.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF GENERAL EDUCATION?

A second aspect of the topic of general education has been over what it is, notably whether it is essentially different from traditional liberal arts education, broadly understood as the social sciences, humanities and natural sciences. The question has been a lively part of the effort to define and develop a place for general eduction as a component of the educational experience within American educational theory for many years.[29]

More recently, there has been an effort to clearly distinguish general education from liberal arts education. Michael Erikson writes:

> *"Liberal education, founded on rationalist principles, oriented toward essentialism, and based in the methods of logic, is concerned with ideas in the abstract, with the conservation of the universal truths handed down through the years, and with the development of the intellect.*

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[27]Bob Davis in "More Fine Tuning: The Skills Mania that will Increasingly Influence High School Teaching is Both Dangerous and Destructive", This Magazine, 9:91: 46-48.

[28]Randall Collins, The Credential Society, Academic Press, 1979: 1-21.

[29]An excellent overview of the debate and attempt to clarify the nature and the aims of general education is provided by Ernest Boyer and Arthur Levine, A Quest for Common Learning, Carnegie Foundation, 1981.

> *General education, founded on instrumentalist assumptions, oriented toward existentialism, based on psychological methods, is concerned with experimentation and problem solving for the individual and social action, with the problems of the present and the future, and with the development of the individual."*[30]

In Canada, the discussion has tended to parallel the work occurring in the United States and Britain of bringing "the traditional values of liberal studies into a more contemporary focus by recognizing the changing nature of modern society, the heterogeneity of the student population, and the need to accommodate to the inevitable pressure for vocational requirements."[31] There has also been an interest in documenting how Canadian educational institutions have managed, or not managed, to effectively implement it.[32]

An important distinction has been established by Vision 2000 and the CSAC documents which frames the discussion of this issue in a particular way for Ontario colleges. In American educational theory, general education often refers to both broadly transferable skills such as communication, reasoning, problem-solving etc., as well as to general knowledge. By contrast, Vision 2000 and CSAC have clearly distinguished between broadly applicable and transferable skills (i.e. generic skills) and general knowledge and familiarity with liberal arts and science subject areas whether in a discipline-specific or interdisciplinary mode.[33]

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[30]Michael Erikson in "General and Liberal Education: Competing Paradigms", Community College Review, 19:4 (1991): 183.

[31]J. D. Dennison and P. Gallagher, Canada's Community Colleges: A Critical Analysis, University of British Columbia Press, 1986: 240-241.

[32]Nathalie Sorensen, General Education in Canada's Community Colleges and Institutes, Canadian Studies Bureau: Association of Canadian Community Colleges, 1984.

[33]The seminal Vision 2000 paper clarifying general education, generic skills and vocational education within the context of the Ontario colleges was Michael Park's "Expanding the Core", Vision 2000, Study Team Four Background Paper. Park's paper has served as the basis of the definitions of general education for both Vision 2000 and the CSAC Establishment Board.

SHOULD THE COLLEGES EDUCATE A PARTICIPATING CITIZENRY?

Closely tied to the preceding discussion of the role and nature of general education has been the longstanding issue of the whether and/or how to prepare individuals for a modern, democratic society.

Historically, liberal education has had the explicit purpose, among other aims, of educating individuals for the life of a free citizen capable of participating responsibility in a political community, and it has done this by focusing on the knowledge, practices, virtues and aptitudes appropriate for involvement in civic life. The general contention is that in a modern, democratic society it is as important as ever to prepare individuals to understand and use their freedom wisely as citizens, and to ensure that all are provided with such a preparation, whether through a liberal or general education. This view is, for example, expressed in the CAAT's initial "Statement of Philosophy and Basic Policies".

Although we are not aware of any direct opposition to this argument itself, there is broad, but diffuse resistance to, or neglect of, its point which arises implicitly through advancing an alternative view. The alternative view is that preparing individuals to work and survive in our industrialized, competitive economy is simply more important, even if it means overruling a broad-based education. This pragmatic position on the nature and role of college education suggests a number of possible, though implicit arguments on this issue: (a) preparation for jobs is preparation for life as a free and responsible citizen; (b) such education can be obtained after an individual is trained for an occupation and has a secure job; (c) such an education should be left up to the individual and is not really part of the mandate of college education.

At the heart of this issue is a discrepancy between what is said and formalized in principle, and what is actually done and said in practice. Although there are a number of cynical interpretations of this discrepancy, an analysis of it and the broad issue of liberal education has been offered which locates the source of the problem in a contradiction that centres on our modern liberal democratic commitment to equality. The basic point is that modern education is plagued by the consequences of assuming that political freedom and its responsibilities are actually wanted, or can be pursued, by all, rather than a few.[34]

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[34]Leo Strauss "Liberal Education and Responsibility" in Liberalism: Ancient and Modern, Cornell, 1980.

DOES COLLEGE EDUCATION PARTICIPATE IN REPRODUCING SOCIAL INEQUALITY?

One of the most contentious aspects of the debate over general education is the role it plays and should play in our society's systems of social stratification. The focus of the debate is on whether or not the existing educational institution basically reproduces the inequalities of the established social order along class, gender and racial lines, for instance, or provides individuals with real opportunity and improvement notably in the area of their life chances.

Many argue that the existing educational system, with its division between university and college and its emphasis on job-specific training within the colleges, both mirrors and reproduces a broad class distinction. The contention is that a liberal education is not only integral to the education of the free citizen, but also part of the education of the advantaged classes in our society.

With respect to life chances there has been a growing body of evidence that supports the claim that the current post-secondary educational system in both Canada and the United States does, in part, reproduce a class system rather than provide the means of real opportunity, mobility, and improvement, including some longitudinal research conducted for the federal government.[35] These findings are consistent with research and theory that has examined these trends in various industrialized countries around the world.[36]

The trends indicated by such research were also noted by the Vision 2000 study team engaged in an Environmental Scan of Ontario's college system,[37] although, curiously, the Vision 2000 Final Report elected not to include any reference to these findings.

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[35]Statistics Canada, Education Statistics Bulletin, "The Class of 82 Revisited", February, 1989 suggests a correlation between socio-economic status and post-secondary education.

[36]P. Bourdieu and J. Passeron, Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture, 1977; and S. Kemmis and L. Fitzclaren, Curriculum Theorising: Beyond Reproduction Theory, Deakin University, 1986.

[37]W. N. Grubb, "Correcting Conventional Wisdom", Community, Technical and Junior College Journal, June/July, 1992.

On the other side, most of the data supporting the benefits of college eduction in Canada and the United States have been the annual placement statistics compiled by the colleges and the government agencies responsible for them.

A very recent longitudinal study of 1972 American post-secondary students challenges both the critics as well as the more fervent boosters of the opportunities afforded by college education.[38] The study's detailed data indicate a fairly positive, but complex, pattern with payoffs to students who complete certification, notably women, in specific occupational areas. These payoffs become apparent a number of years later when compared with high school graduates, and transcend the acknowledged influence of family background.

Arguments as well as research establishing a link between general education and real economic, social and educational opportunity and improvement have been presented by representatives of labour, business and education,[39] although the connections have sometimes been criticized for not necessarily being as clear as they are often made out to be.[40]

Finally, there is also a well-established argument within "critical education theory" that incorporates a stronger emphasis on general education as part of empowering marginalized and disadvantaged groups, although general education within this

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[38]Study Team 1, Empirical Features of the College System, Final Report, Vision 2000, 1989.

[39]With regard to economic opportunities, see James Turk's examination of "The Educational Implications of Our 'Technological Society'" (a paper presented at the Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, Fall, 1986); Walter Nolte, Guaranteed Student Success: General Education and Occupational Programs", Community College Review, 19:1; and Thomas Hurka, "How to Get to the Top--Study Philosophy", Globe and Mail, Jan. 2, 1990. With regard to educational opportunities see Roger J. Barry and Phyllis A. Barry, "Establishing Equality in the Articulation Process", New Directions for Community Colleges, No. 78, Summer, 1992: 35-44; and Carolyn Prager, "Accreditation and Transfer: Mitigating Elitism", New Directions for Community Colleges, No. 78, Summer, 1992.

[40]Elizabeth L. Useem, Low Tech Education in a High Tech World, Macmillan Free Press, 1989.

approach often tends to refer to a grounding in literacy and analytic reasoning as well as social activism.[41]

IMPLICATIONS OF GENERAL EDUCATION FOR CURRICULUM AND PEDADOGY

The questions and issues concerning general education have not been limited to definition, role and benefits. They have also included ongoing debates over curriculum and pedagogy. Two issues are of particular importance: inclusiveness and outcomes.

Hirsch's recommendations for a curriculum in which students would be familiar with key words suggests a "canon" of historically significant individuals, events, concepts, and texts, and there have been several efforts to identify and engage students with such a canon in both colleges and universities.[42]

The advocacy of a canon has sparked a controversy over the principles guiding what and who is included.[43] On the one hand, there is the argument that a general education has the responsibility to familiarize students with the systems, institutions and cultural heritage of the society in which they are participating. On the other hand, the case is increasingly being made that such a curriculum tends to ignore or downplay the contributions of minority groups in our society as well as the achievements and traditions of societies outside of the "western tradition".

This controversy is especially significant given the realities that both arguments bring to the discussion - the multicultural and multiracial diversity of our community; and a reliance on institutions and principles of our society which are often poorly understood regardless of an individual's minority/dominant group status. The controversy is further complicated by differing views among minority group members

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[41]P. Friere, Cultural Action for Freedom, Centre for the Study of Change, Cambridge, Mass., 1970; and R. McTaggart and S. Kemmis, The Action Research Reader, Deakin, 1988.

[42]John Thorp, "The Jewel in the King's Crown", The Canadian Federation for the Humanities;, The Humanities Project; D. Eisenberg, et. al., Advancing Humanities Studies at Community, Technical and Junior Colleges, American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, 1991.

[43]"Who Needs the Great Works?", Harpers, September, 1989: 43-52; Caleb Nelson, "Harvard's Hollow 'Core'", The Atlantic Monthly, September, 1990: 70-80.

and among dominant group members over what an appropriate policy should strive to do.[44]

General education also raises a significant problem regarding conventional pedagogy in the colleges. If one of the key purposes of general education is to engage the "whole person" in preparation for a career and a life as a member of a community, then it raises questions centred on current approaches to curriculum and pedagogy which focus on performance objectives and behaviourally-defined competencies, even when sensitive to adult learning requirements.[45] On the one hand, general education will, by definition, require orienting to matters of process and outcomes that extend beyond the prevailing conceptions of objectives with their immediately visible behavioral focus. On the other hand, the increasing concern over educational accountability and verifiable evaluation require that it address the problem of formulating clear, assessable outcomes which do not compromise the nature of its endeavour, or convincingly articulate an alternative model, if it is to have institutional credibility.

IV. PROFILE OF GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE PROGRAMS

The following is an overview of the findings of the consultant, Barry Kaplan, regarding the proportion of vocational, generic skills and general education courses in post-secondary programs.

PROGRAM CHARTS

Essentially, the consultant developed a "program chart", listing the courses in each post-secondary program based on the information in the 1993/94 George Brown Calendar and the college's program data base. (See Appendix "F" Example of Program Chart.)

Then, using the course code and title, he made a preliminary assessment of whether courses were vocational, generic skills, general education or vocationally applied generic skills or general education. (See Appendix "G", Coding Decision Rules.) He also assessed whether elective courses were offered from a menu of general

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[44]D. D'Souza, Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus; Random House/Vintage, 1992.

[45]Malcolm Knowles, The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Androgogy Versus Pedagogy, Follett Publishing, 1970

education courses or an "other" menu of vocational, generic skills and/or some general education courses.

As a final step, the program charts were sent to appropriate chairs and coordinators for amendment.

DEFINITIONS OF COURSE CATEGORIES

For the purposes of this survey, ***vocational courses*** means that the course content has been primarily or entirely designed to prepare students with knowledge, skills, experience and/or applications for a specific trade, profession or occupation.

Generic skills courses means the course content is **dedicated** to teaching any one of five practical life skills which CSAC identified to be essential for personal and career success in our contemporary society:

- communications (language and literacy)
- mathematics (numeracy and math concepts)
- computer literacy (basic or foundation computer skills)
- interpersonal skills (human relations)
- analytic reasoning (critical thinking and problem solving)

Only courses at an introductory or foundations level were regarded as generic and counted for this survey. (see Appendix "G" - Coding Decision Rules).

General education courses means the course content is dedicated to the "broad study of subjects and issues which are central to life in our culture...and to encouraging students to know and understand themselves, their society and institutions and their roles and responsibilities as citizens."[46]

Generic Skills or general education, vocationally applied, means that the course content, while generic skills or general education, has been tailored to a specific occupational area.

Finally, ***general education only*** **electives** means that the students were provided with an **elective** opportunity where the choices were among general education offerings only. By contrast, if the choices were some combination of vocational and/or generic skills and/or general education, they were recorded as **other elective**.

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[46]"Vision 2000", 1990, p. 35.

SURVEY RESULTS

For the purposes of this Interim Report, the consultant provided us with

- information on the overall findings for George Brown College's fulltime post-secondary programs (see Diagram 1-- Category Totals and Percentages; and Table 1--Course Category as a Percentage of Total Courses);
- a bar graph depicting the proportion of general education courses as a percentage of total courses for each fulltime post-secondary program (see Graph 1-- Percentages: General Education courses to Total Courses); and
- a table summarizing the totals for each type of course (i.e. Vocational, Generic Skills, etc.) for each fulltime post-secondary program (see Table 2 -- FT/PS Programs: sorted by Alphabet).

These are preliminary results since not all of the amended program charts were received in time for this report.[47] In addition, there was variation in the interpretation of course type, for example, in the area of vocationally applied generic skills and general education. Finally, there was human error in attempting to compile over 60,000 items of data.

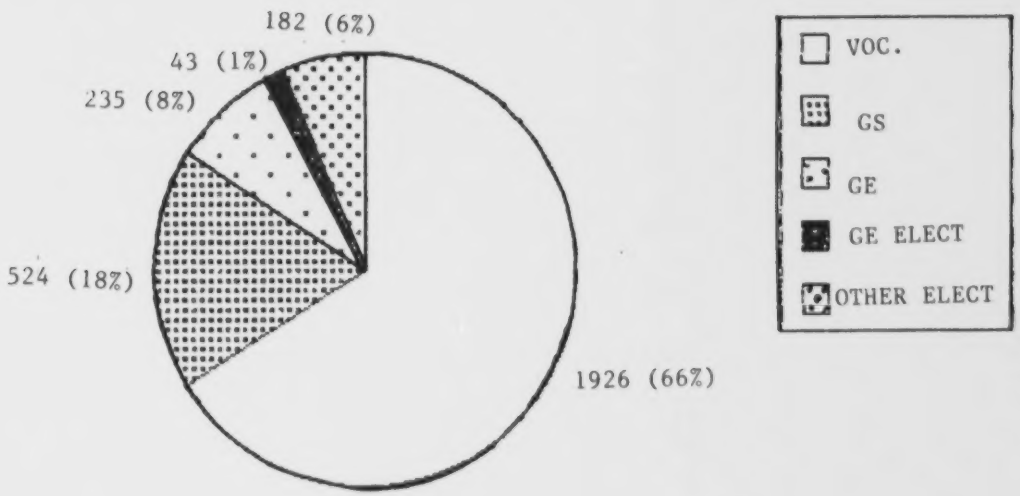
Despite these limitations, the preliminary results do provide a broad indication of the results of applying CSACs definitions to our college's post-secondary programs.

[47]However, those charts which were returned were almost entirely in agreement with the consultant's initial assessment.

TABLE 1: COURSE CATEGORY AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL COURSES

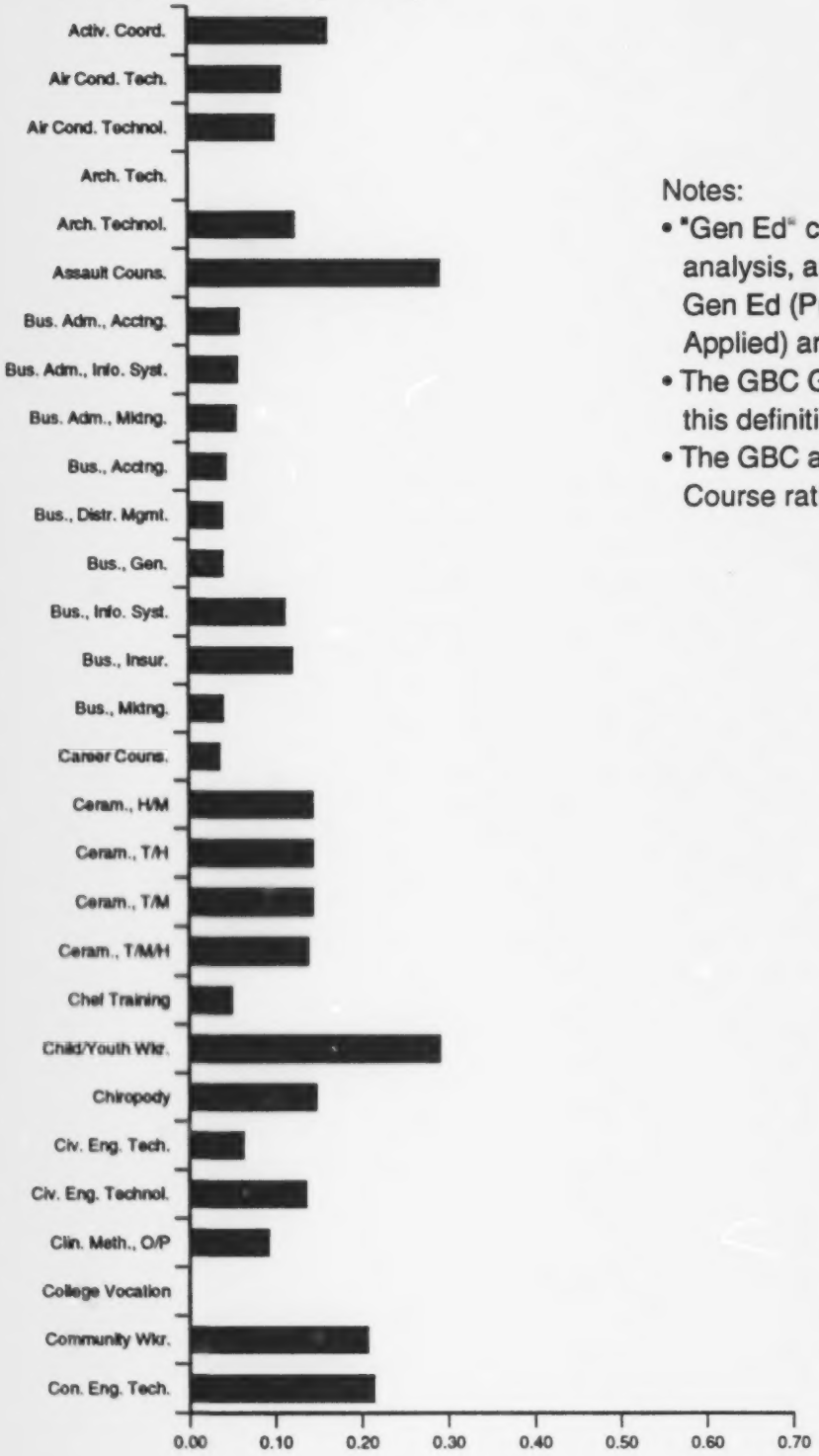
CATEGORY OF COURSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Vocational	1,926	66%
Generic Skills	209	7%
Generic Skills, Vocationally Applied	315	11%
General Education	72	2%
General Education, Vocationally Applied	163	6%
General Education Electives	43	1%
Other Electives	182	6%
	2,910	100%

CATEGORY TOTALS AND PERCENTAGES



Note: The number of "Vocationally Applied" Genetic skills and General Education courses is 478.

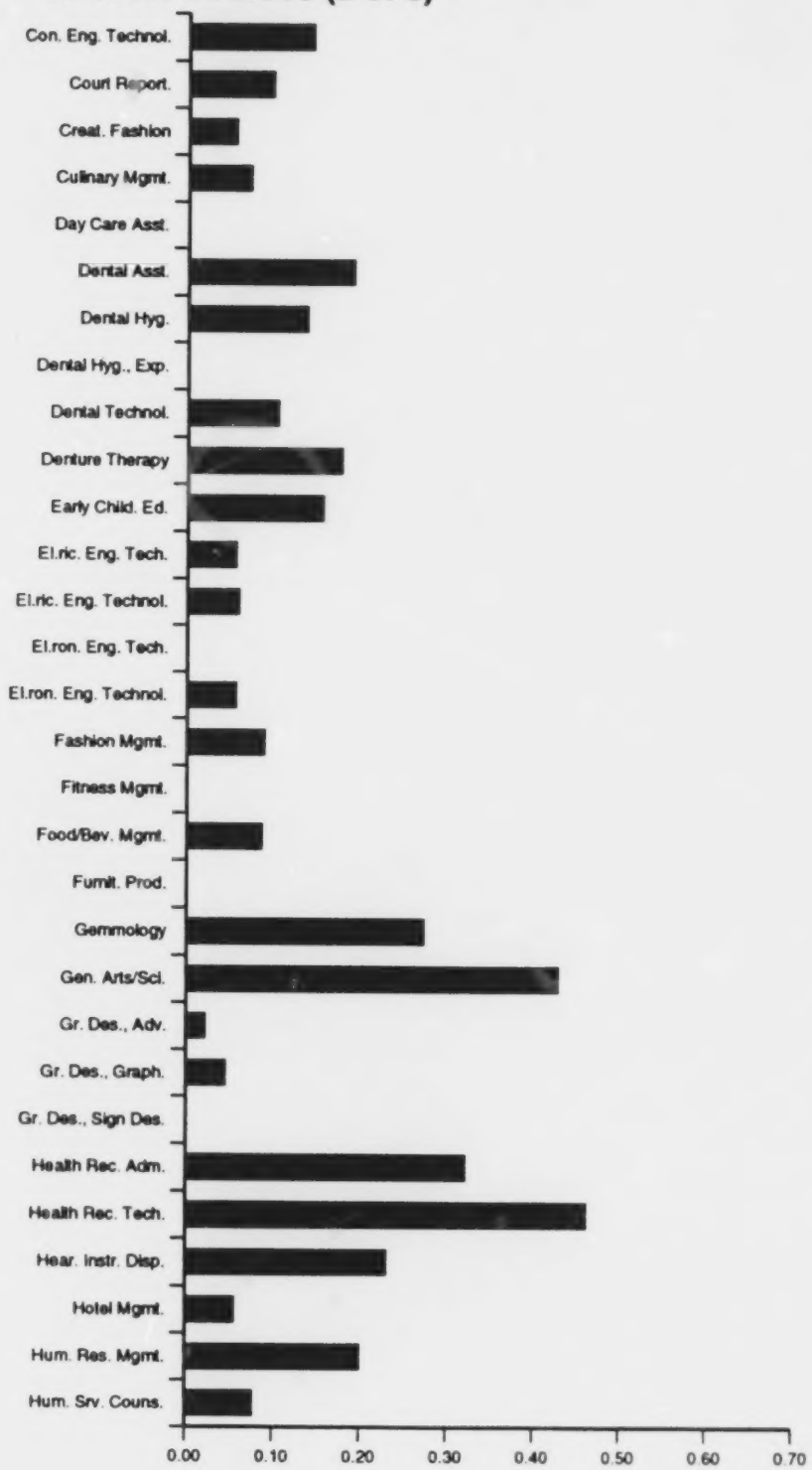
Percentages: General Education Courses to Total Courses (1 of 3)



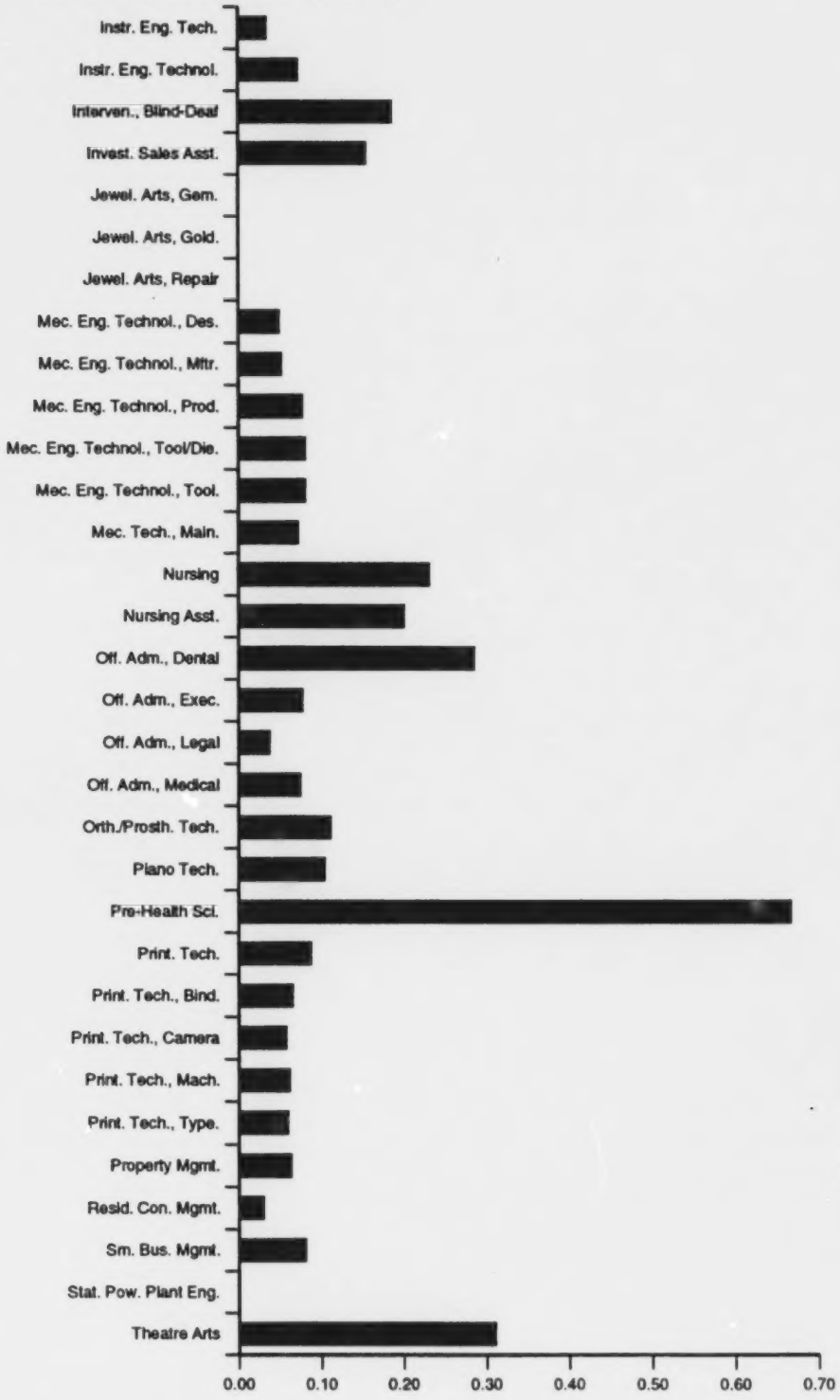
Notes:

- "Gen Ed" courses, as used in this analysis, are comprised of Required Gen Ed (Pure and Vocationally Applied) and Gen Ed Electives.
- The GBC Gen Ed course total, using this definition = 278
- The GBC average Gen Ed to Total Course ratio = 0.09553.

Percentages: General Education Courses to Total Courses (2 of 3)



Percentages: General Education Courses to Total Courses (3 of 3)



FT/PS Programs: Sorted by Alphabet (1 of 3)

	Acad. Div.	Vocat-ional	Generic Skills	General Educ.	Vocat. Applied	Req'd.	Elective GE Only	Elective Other
Activ. Coord.	CS	21	5	5	10	31	0	0
Air Cond. Tech.	T	19	5	2	4	26	1	1
Air Cond. Technol.	T	28	8	3	5	38	1	1
Arch. Tech.	T	9	4	0	3	13	0	2
Arch. Technol.	T	35	9	2	6	42	4	3
Assault Couns.	CS	21	1	9	9	31	0	0
Bus. Adm., Acctng.	B	22	5	2	5	29	0	5
Bus. Adm., Info. Syst.	B	22	5	2	5	29	0	6
Bus. Adm., Mktng.	B	22	6	2	7	30	0	6
Bus., Acctng.	B	11	5	1	4	17	0	6
Bus., Distr. Mgmt.	B	14	5	1	4	20	0	5
Bus., Gen.	B	12	8	1	7	21	0	4
Bus., Info. Syst.	B	13	6	1	5	20	2	5
Bus., Insur.	B	11	6	3	8	20	0	5
Bus., Mktng.	B	13	6	1	5	20	0	5
Career Couns.	Acc	22	4	1	4	27	0	1
Ceram., H/M	F	20	4	4	6	28	0	0
Ceram., T/H	F	20	4	4	6	28	0	0
Ceram., T/M	F	20	4	4	6	28	0	0
Ceram., T/M/H	F	21	4	4	6	29	0	0
Chef Training	Hos	16	3	1	0	20	0	0
Child/Youth Wkr.	CS	29	6	11	13	42	0	0
Chiropody	HS	34	0	6	2	41	0	0
Civ. Eng. Tech.	T	10	4	0	1	13	1	2
Civ. Eng. Technol.	T	36	11	2	8	46	5	1
Clin. Meth., O/P	HS	19	1	2	3	22	0	0
College Vocation	Acc	2	8	0	0	10	0	0
Community Wkr.	CS	21	2	7	7	30	0	4
Con. Eng. Tech.	T	19	9	2	6	27	5	1

Note: The total number of full time, post-secondary programs = 91.

FT/PS Programs: Sorted by Alphabet (2 of 3)

	Acad. Div.	Vocat-ional	Generic Skills	General Educ.	Vocat. Applied	Req'd.	Elective GE Only	Elective Other
Con. Eng. Technol.	T	32	12	2	10	43	5	1
Court Report.	B	20	8	3	11	31	0	0
Creat. Fashion	F	33	2	2	1	37	0	0
Culinary Mgmt.	Hos	30	9	3	7	42	0	0
Day Care Asst.	CS	7	8	0	8	15	0	1
Dental Asst.	HS	14	3	4	6	21	0	0
Dental Hyg.	HS	18	1	3	4	22	0	0
Dental Hyg., Exp.	HS	6	0	0	0	6	0	0
Dental Technol.	HS	22	4	3	3	29	0	0
Denture Therapy	HS	28	4	3	8	17	0	0
Early Child. Ed.	CS	23	11	7	16	41	0	4
El.ric. Eng. Tech.	T	22	9	0	3	31	2	3
El.ric. Eng. Technol.	T	35	14	2	2	45	1	5
El.ron. Eng. Tech.	T	19	7	0	3	26	0	1
El.ron. Eng. Technol.	T	23	11	2	8	35	0	1
Fashion Mgmt.	F	31	10	4	7	45	0	0
Fitness Mgmt.	HS	34	2	0	2	36	0	0
Food/Bev. Mgmt.	Hos	22	10	3	4	35	0	0
Furnit. Prod.	F	30	3	0	3	33	0	0
Gemmology	F	5	3	3	5	11	0	0
Gen. Arts/Sci.	Aca	0	7	9	1	16	0	5
Gr. Des., Adv.	GA	40	4	1	4	45	0	2
Gr. Des., Graph.	GA	39	2	2	3	43	0	2
Gr. Des., Sign Des.	GA	21	1	0	1	22	0	0
Health Rec. Adm.	B	13	6	9	13	28	0	0
Health Rec. Tech.	B	5	2	6	7	13	0	0
Hear. Instr. Disp.	HS	7	3	3	3	13	0	0
Hotel Mgmt.	Hos	24	10	2	5	36	0	0
Hum. Res. Mgmt.	B	13	5	5	4	23	0	2
Hum. Srv. Couns.	CS	17	7	3	8	27	0	12

FT/PS Programs: Sorted by Alphabet (3 of 3)

	Acad. Div.	Vocat-ional	Generic Skills	General Educ.	Vocat. Applied	Req'd.	Elective GE Only	Elective Other
Instr. Eng. Tech.	T	24	5	1	3	29	0	1
Instr. Eng. Technol.	T	32	5	3	3	40	0	2
Interven., Blind-Deaf	CS	20	0	5	2	25	0	2
Invest. Sales Asst.	B	6	5	2	4	13	0	0
Jewel. Arts, Gem.	F	30	2	0	2	30	0	4
Jewel. Arts, Gold.	F	36	2	0	2	34	0	4
Jewel. Arts, Repair	F	30	2	0	2	32	0	2
Mec. Eng. Technol., Des.	T	28	9	0	3	37	2	2
Mec. Eng. Technol., Mfr.	T	26	9	0	4	35	2	2
Mec. Eng. Technol., Prod.	T	15	6	0	5	21	2	3
Mec. Eng. Technol., Tool/Die.	T	14	7	0	6	20	2	3
Mec. Eng. Technol., Tool.	T	14	7	0	7	20	2	3
Mec. Tech., Main.	T	20	3	0	0	22	2	4
Nursing	HS	16	3	6	2	25	0	1
Nursing Asst.	HS	8	0	2	0	10	0	0
Off. Adm., Dental	B	6	4	4	4	14	0	0
Off. Adm., Exec.	B	12	11	2	12	25	0	1
Off. Adm., Legal	B	15	10	1	8	26	0	1
Off. Adm., Medical	B	14	10	2	10	26	0	1
Orth./Prosth. Tech.	HS	20	4	3	0	27	0	0
Piano Tech.	T	17	6	0	5	23	3	3
Pre-Health Scl.	HS	0	2	4	0	6	0	0
Print. Tech.	T	33	7	4	7	44	0	2
Print. Tech., Bind.	T	40	9	4	7	53	0	9
Print. Tech., Camera	T	48	9	4	7	61	0	9
Print. Tech., Mach.	T	44	11	4	7	57	0	9
Print. Tech., Type.	T	46	12	4	8	60	0	8
Property Mgmt.	B	26	4	2	5	32	0	0
Resid. Con. Mgmt.	T	24	7	0	6	31	1	3
Sm. Bus. Mgmt.	B	16	6	2	5	24	0	1
Stat. Pow. Plant Eng.	T	26	3	0	3	29	0	0
Theatre Arts	Aca	23	19	18	32	58	0	0

If we combine all general education categories, including vocationally applied, then on **average, general education courses constitute about 9% of all post-secondary programs courses at the College.**[48]

Courses dedicated to generic skills training constitute about 18% of the total. However, generic skills courses also constitute a large portion of the "Other Electives" category; based on the information available, approximately half (or 3% of total program courses). In addition, many chairs and program coordinators notified us that a significant portion of many of their vocational courses dealt with generic skills training and was not being visibly included in the overall picture.[49]

Based on the information available at the time of writing the "Interim Report", **about 60% of general education and generic skills courses, both required and electives, are vocationally applied.** (See Table 1, page 23) For the completed consultant's report, see the Supplemental Report.

[48]Based on the consultant's data, the precise mean is 9.553%.

[49]The Task Force was aware of this and expects that the proportion and nature of generic skills training occurring in vocational courses will be identified as part of the Quality Scan process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following three sections constitute the recommendations of the General Education Task Force in the areas of

- a philosophy statement
- curriculum
- implementation

V. RECOMMENDED PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The General Education Task Force recommends that George Brown College adopt the following broad philosophy statement regarding the nature and purpose of general education:

> George Brown College supports the recommendations of both Vision 2000 and the CSAC Establishment Board Report regarding the nature, goals and importance of general education and generic skills development in post-secondary college programs.
>
> Practically, the purpose of general education is to balance the tendency towards occupational specialization and to increase a student's educational, social and economic opportunities in a rapidly changing world. While recognizing the strengths of vocational training, general education involves students in a wider multidisciplinary educational experience.
>
> General education refers to the broad study of subjects and issues which are significant to life in modern society. Drawing from the humanities, natural sciences and social sciences, general education encourages students
>
> - to critically reflect upon themselves, their own and other cultures, society and its institutions as well as the interrelationships among them;
> - to participate more effectively in the social, political and economic life of their communities;
> - to develop their abilities to formulate and achieve personal goals; and
> - to understand the continuities of the human experience within a culturally diverse world.

General education courses are intended to increase students' awareness of the world in which they live; to give them an understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens in their society; to foster in them the ability to express themselves cogently on a variety of human issues; to facilitate the development and utilization of generic skills; and to engage them in a program of life-long learning.

VI. CURRICULUM RECOMMENDATIONS

The work of the Curriculum Committee was partially defined by the need to refine the very broad definitions and goals provided by the Ministry documents for general education, by the issues that the Establishment Board Report stated were to be taken up at the local college level and by the philosophy statement developed by the Philosophy Subcommittee.

The Task Force agreed that general education curriculum development would be informed by educational research and discussion on general education and generic skills, and invited resource persons to speak to some of the knottier issues such as evaluation of various delivery modes and implications of adopting particular curriculum models.

Because of the number and complexity of the issues before them, and being committed to doing the job well, the Curriculum Committee has opted to take the time needed for thoughtful consideration of the issues and will continue its work in the Fall. The recommendations submitted for this report should be viewed as in process; some of the issues have yet to be addressed.

The issues before the committee include:

a) developing specific outcomes for general education courses;

b) developing clear and definitive criteria for general education courses;

c) deciding whether to stay with a completely elective format or to impose a general education requirement, e.g. a foundation course;

d) finding an appropriate curriculum model to guide general education course development;

e) ensuring that students are exposed to breadth of content in their general education courses offerings;

f) determining what and how skills will be integrated into general education courses; and

g) determining suitable pedagogy and delivery modes for various kinds of general education courses.

With respect to item "c", the Committee, while sensitive to the recommendation that, where possible, student choice be accommodated in selection of general education courses, decided to recommend a mandatory first semester general education foundation course. The members thought that this would ensure that all students would be presented with certain common required material. In the absence of a foundation course, a burden would be placed on the other general education courses to make sure that these areas are covered. The group was also aware that a precedent for this approach exists at Humber College; Humber has a required general education foundation course, well-received by students, which forms the underpinning for an elective system.

The General Education Task Force recommends that:

1. **Broad Content Areas**

consistent with the Colleges' Standards and Accreditation Council (CSAC) recommendations, the following three broad content categories be established; and further, that all post-secondary students be required over a two-year program to take at least one course from each category:

a) **Arts and Humanities**

The Humanities are those areas of study which deal with the world of ideas and meaning, and with the creative and cultural expression of human experience.

Examples of courses in the Arts and Humanities are:

- Arts
- Literature
- Music
- Language
- Aesthetics
- Religion
- Philosophy
- History

b) **Social Sciences**

The Social Sciences are those areas of study which investigate the self, society, its institutions and cultural systems as well as the interrelationships between them in a disciplined manner.

Examples of courses in the Social Sciences are:

- Anthropology
- Sociology
- Psychology
- Political Science
- Social Psychology
- Social History
- Economics

c) **Science and Technology**

Science and Technology deal with the nature of the physical world, its development and the principles of its functioning which give rise to technological applications.

Examples of courses in Science and Technology are:

- Engineering
- Geology
- Biomechanics
- Physics
- Chemistry
- Biology
- Mathematics, (not on a skill level) such as the history of Mathematics, Number Theory and Game Theory.

Interdisciplinary or Thematic courses are an option for general education courses but must be assigned primarily to one of the above categories.

Interdisciplinary courses include treatments of a single theme or issue from more than one perspective.

Examples of Interdisciplinary courses are:

- "The Individual and Freedom", which may be treated from historical, philosophical, ethical, sociological and psychological points of view.

- "Literature as Propaganda", which may combine a sociological viewpoint with a literary subject
- The Environment in the Third World
- Ethical Issues in a variety of sciences
- The History of Education
- The World of Work

Aims, Objectives and Outcomes

2. consistent with our philosophy of general education, the guidelines for the Foundations course and other general education courses emphasize aims, objectives, and outcomes in addition to broad principles regarding content.

Criteria for Content Areas

3. the following general questions serve as criteria for determining appropriate content in the three broad content areas:

Arts and Humanities

- Does the course address themes and content typically associated with the arts and humanities?
- Does the course introduce the students to the language, history and methods of the arts and humanities?
- Does the course examine the interconnection between the arts and humanities and the larger society?
- Does the course present a variety of perspectives on the issues?
- Does the course enable the student to critically reflect on and express those reflections on themes and issues relating to the arts and humanities?

Social Sciences

- Does the course focus on themes and content typically associated with the social sciences?
- Does the course introduce the students to the language, history and methods of the social sciences?

- Does the course introduce the students to a variety of perspectives and theories related to the social sciences?

- Does the course enable the students to critically reflect on the themes and issues related to the social sciences, including the strengths and limitations of its various approaches to those themes and issues?

- Does the course make connections among issues, themes and content of the course and the world in which the student lives?

Science and Technology

- Does this course address broad themes and content typically associated with science and technology including various perspectives and their limitations, beyond vocational applications?

- Does this course introduce the student to the language, history and methods of science and technology?

- Does this course encourage the student to examine aspects of scientific laws and theories as they pertain to the universe?

- Does this course introduce the student to the role of experimentation in the development of scientific theory?

- Does this course introduce the student to the methods which can be used when measuring and dealing with quantifiable entities?

Discrete Courses

4. in accordance with the CSAC recommendations, the College adopt a model of discrete courses designed to exemplify general education principles, rather than the "infusion" model of determining what proportion of existing or to-be-developed courses are general education content.

Respecting Students

5. that general education courses should reflect a commitment to empowering students in their own learning by:

a) being sensitive to the experiences and perspectives of the participants in the classroom with respect to class, race, gender and sexual orientation;

b) where reasonable, involving the students in determining the goals, directions, teaching methodologies and evaluation techniques of the course;

c) fostering an interactive environment that acknowledges different learning styles and that provides the opportunity and support needed to develop the skills necessary to fully benefit from such a learning environment; and,

d) valuing learning and growth in the emotional, intuitive and rational domains.

Foundations Course

6. by September, 1994, the College offer a Foundations Course as a compulsory first semester course for all post-secondary students across all Divisions.

NOTE:
In accord with the CSAC recommendations, this requirement is limited initially to post-secondary programs. However, the General Education Task Force strongly supports the integration of general education programming into non-post-secondary programs, so as to prevent a form of two-tiered training or unofficial streaming of College students.

7. the proposed Foundations Course have the following as main objectives:

a) to introduce the student to general content and methods of inquiry in three broad content areas:

- the arts and humanities
- the social sciences
- science and technology.

b) to give the student an opportunity to experience the practice, methods and processes of each main content area.

c) to give the student an opportunity to critically reflect on and analyze relevant issues in each of the three main content areas.

d) to give the student an opportunity to examine:

- common human issues,
- the diverse human experience of those issues, and
- issues of prejudice and discrimination.

8. the current general education course, "Being Human", be considered in developing the proposed Foundations course, with expanded objectives and content in Science and Technology.

Course Development Committee

9. a course development committee be established by June 1993

a) to work on the foundations course; and

b) to invite and assist faculty from vocational departments to develop a general education course related to their profession and trade which could be offered to students in their own and other programs. (See "Implementation Recommendations", Recommendation #12.)

10. the College develop a second-term general education elective that would expand and build upon the compulsory Foundations course.

General Education Review Committee

11. the College establish a General Education Review Committee, reporting to the Program Approval Committee (which has wide representation and jointly reports to the Council of Deans and College Council).

The General Education Review Committee shall:

a) ensure that the Foundations Course is up-to-date;

b) establish standards of student performance in the Foundations Course;

c) refine the specific criteria developed by the Task Force for the aims, outcomes and content of general education courses;

d) assess proposed and existing courses to determine whether they meet general education criteria;

e) establish specific criteria by which some programs can be exempted from the requirement to have all post-secondary students take the course(s);

f) coordinate relevant approval processes with the College's Programs Committee;

g) address articulation and Prior Learning Assessment implications of and for general education;

h) encourage the development of general education in the College.

The General Education Review Committee should be limited to 8 members but have broad representation in order to balance the interests and needs of the divisions and maintain the integrity of the general education category area.

Curriculum and Pedagogy Principles

12. the following curriculum and pedagogy principles guide the development, delivery and review of general education courses in the arts and humanities, social sciences, and the science and technologies content areas.

The principles proposed below for building general education courses have as their proper goal a model which will strengthen both the "habit of reflection" on problems presented in the broad content areas as well as the "practical skills" needed for formulating, researching, developing and presenting good responses to those problems.[50]

A general education course should:

a) foster inquiry and problem-solving in its pedagogy, content and evaluation;

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[50]The Framework and several of the principles have been adapted from Maureen Hynes, "ESL Teacher Education:/Five Principles", TESL Canada Journal, Vol. 3, No. 1, (1985): 81-88.

b) provide a supportive environment for discussion, inquiry, creativity as well as practising the skills, knowledge and discipline of a subject;

c) be collaborative and participatory in its approach to learning and course development, involving students where possible;

d) balance the development of analytic abilities with a method for encouraging consolidation of the component parts of the course and integration of the course content into an individual's life experiences and knowledge;[51]

e) foster a "critical" understanding of its subject matter by assessing course material in terms of its assumptions, cogency, scientific validity and/or aesthetics, as well as in terms of its psychological, social and moral implications;[52]

f) examine its subject matter from a variety of perspectives and identify connections with other disciplines, subjects or areas of human endeavour;

g) be aware of the "hidden curriculum" and ensure that it genuinely reflects the philosophy, pedagogic principles and broad learning outcomes of general education. (The hidden curriculum refers to the set of unstated values, norms and beliefs implicitly transmitted through the selection of course material, the way the classes are structured and how content is delivered and evaluated, in contrast to the formally stated and sanctioned aspects of educational experience.)[53]

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[51]A model for integration is offered by J.J. Schwab, "The Practical: Translation into Curriculum", School Review, Vol. 81, (1973): 501-511.

[52]For an overview of some of the discussion of the term in the context of education, see M. J. Coles and W. D. Robinson, Teaching Thinking: A Survey of Programmes in Education, Bristol Press, 1989; and Stephen Kemmis, "Critical Educational Research", a paper prepared for the meeting of the Critical Theory Pre-Conference of the North American Adult Education Association Research Conference, University of Calgary, May 5-6, 1988.

[53]H. Giroux and A. Penna, "Social Relations in the Classroom; the Dialectic of the Hidden Curriculum", Edcentric, 1977: 39-46; Stephen Richer, "Equality to Benefit from Schooling: The Issue of Educational Opportunity", in Dennis Forcese and Stephen Richer (ed), Social Issues, (2nd ed.), Prentice-Hall, 1988.

h) in keeping with the broadening holistic orientation of general education, work with conceptions of learning outcomes and competencies that are based on the totality of human "action"[54], including its subjective aspects, and that emphasize educational process, knowledge and understanding, rather than the more behaviouristic conceptions which emphasize product and performance.[55]

i) develop an understanding of the processes and institutions that characterize our society, a respect for alternative approaches and an appreciation of the diversity of individual/group experiences and perspectives concerning these institutions.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force has attempted to provide a fairly comprehensive set of practical recommendations for implementing an integrated curriculum of vocational education, general education and generic skills training across the college. The recommendations are aimed not only at meeting CSACs concrete target of one three hour per week general education course per semester by September 1994, but also at responding to CSACs intent of developing a "balanced" college education as well as at recognizing the sober realities which face our college in the areas of limited funding, program hours, and potential faculty relocation.

The Task Force is fully aware that responding to CSACs recommendations regarding general education and generic skills in a serious manner will have implications for almost all programs and departments in the college. The Task Force members agreed to be guided by its working principles in developing its recommendations, notably the principles of

- creating a curriculum that benefited the college as a whole,
- maintaining the integrity of programs and general education,and
- minimizing job disruption while maximizing opportunities for growth and development.

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[54]Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, Free Press, 1947: 88; Richard J. Bernstein, Praxis and Action, University of Pennsylvania.

[55]Nancy S. Jackson, "The Case Against Competence", Our Schools/Our Selves, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1989): 77-85.

Given the breadth of the assignment, the Task Force suggests that the recommendations be understood and assessed as a whole and that the implications of any particular recommendation be considered in terms of its educational integrity as well as in terms of the diversity of interests of the college community.

The General Education Task Force recommends that:

Adopting Working Principles

1. the College adopt and be guided by the Working Principles of the General Education Task Force in developing and implementing policies and requirements concerning general education and generic skills in College programs. These principles are a commitment to:

    - creating a general education curriculum that benefits the College and its members as a whole, rather than any particular sector

    - developing a general education curriculum that is informed by the educational discussion, theory and research on general education

    - formulating, collaboratively, a general education and generic skills curriculum

    - maintaining the integrity of all curriculum components, vocational, generic skills and general education

    - advocating that the educational, social and economic opportunities afforded by a general education component be available to all college students, including those in non-post-secondary programs

    - making use of the distinctive strengths of the community college in developing and delivering a general education curriculum. These include:

        a) the colleges' long-standing emphasis on teaching and attentiveness to student needs and interests

        b) a respect for the traditions and general contributions of our professions and trades

c) involving those who are interested and who have, or seek to expand their general education background in the promotion or delivery of general education

- minimizing job disruption and preventing job loss while incorporating the increased emphasis on general education and generic skills within college programs

- maximizing the opportunities offered by this curriculum change for faculty growth and program review.

Utilizing the College's Program Review and Revision Process

2. Where possible, the process of implementing CSAC requirements and College guidelines concerning general education and generic skills be part of the College's program review and revision process (i.e. "Quality Scan") with a PERC team representative of all stakeholders.

3. The College's program review and revision process (i.e. "Quality Scan") include:

a) assessing the amount and kind of general education currently offered in the program using the CSAC definition as well as the General Education Task Force philosophy statement and curriculum guidelines;

b) if the program's general education content is below Ministry requirements, assessing which courses might become general eduction courses, and/or developing options for where and how hours can be made available in a program for general education, both required and elective courses;

c) identifying the strengths, weaknesses as well as resources needed to meet the Ministry requirements for each option;

d) examining where in the program students may be provided with elective opportunities;

e) assessing the amount and kind of generic skills content currently offered in the program, both in discrete generic skills courses and within vocational and general education courses, using the CSAC and General Education Task Force working definitions;

f) identifying the generic skill areas in which students are given diagnostic tests upon entry to the program, and describing the nature of the test;

g) providing a general profile of students' proficiency in each of the generic skill areas both upon entry to the program and upon graduation using the definitions and broad standards developed by the Generic Skills Subcommittee of the General Education Task Force;

h) identifying what specific generic skills and abilities need to be improved;

i) formulating and evaluating options for where and how this can be accomplished (i.e., identifying the strengths, weaknesses and resources required for each option); and

j) identifying the extent of remediation in the generic skills areas currently occurring within courses, and examining the implications this has for specific courses and the program as a whole.

4. when reviewing and revising programs, the program review team refer to Appendix "H" for ideas and strategies for the implementation of general education and generic skills.

Curriculum and Advisory Committees

5. the College assess and modify the existing structure for administering divisional program and curriculum development and review by:

a) identifying where decisions regarding curriculum are currently being made in programs and who is primarily involved in making them; and if all the stakeholders are adequately represented in the discussion and decision-making process;

b) establishing standing program or departmental curriculum committees, where feasible, to provide a local forum for broader faculty involvement in creating, monitoring, and reviewing curriculum;

c) revising the guidelines for Advisory Committees to ensure that the guidelines express the renewed mandate of the colleges and the attention to generic skills and general education, as well as to ensure a broad-based representation of the community.

Remediation and Learning Resources

6. the College identify remedial needs of students, and address remediation in the generic skills areas outside of current program hours, where reasonable. This can be accomplished by:

a) using the skill lists and levels currently being developed by the Generic Skills Subcommittee as a guide to establish the minimum standards for communication and math required to successfully pursue college-level programs;

b) assessing incoming students regarding their proficiency in communications and math; (while incoming students may be assessed in the other generic skill areas as well, it is recommended that such assessments be used only for information purposes);

c) establishing remediation courses and programs to assist students in improving to college-level proficiency in math and communications;

d) using Continuing Education as a provider of some remedial courses;

e) establishing resource centres across the college to assist students who may not require entire remediation courses, but who may experience difficulties in the generic skill areas;

f) ensuring discussions and assessments of the need for remediation among students take into consideration the possibility of inaccurately defining remediation as a student's problem when it may reflect shortcomings or limits of the approach to teaching;

g) creating distinctive general education courses, or selections of courses, especially suited to English for Academic Purposes students and their special needs that are oriented to the same broad learning outcomes;

h) establishing a post-secondary semester or year foundation program for students who wish to substantially strengthen their skills and background knowledge before entering a program area (e.g. Pre Health).

Infusion of Generic Skills

7. given the separation of remediation from programs, college-level generic skills development be "infused" across the entire curriculum where possible by becoming an explicit, systematic part of vocational and general education courses. This would be one way of simultaneously freeing up hours for general education, minimizing the disruption of vocational faculty and making available faculty who may wish to take on general education courses.

Clarifying Course and Program Information

8. the College clarify course and program information in the areas of general education and generic skills by:

a) including statements in the 1994-95 calendar concerning the nature and purpose of general education; the emphasis to be given to proficiency in the five generic skill areas; and the Ministry's requirement of one general education course per semester on average;

b) assessing course codes and titles for clarity and accuracy as part of the program review process, and revising them where necessary;

c) identifying general education courses with a distinguishing course code(s).

Registration and Scheduling of Post-Secondary Programs

9. the College

a) establish a system of registration by course; and

b) in order to facilitate the creation of a campus-wide program of general education elective course offerings, the college give high priority to instituting a schedule of common start and stop dates as well as similar semester lengths for post-secondary programs, where reasonable.

General Education Department

10. the College create a distinct general education department which operates in terms of both the college's "functional" (or bureaucratic) organizational structure and an "integrative" (or matrix) structure. The department would have the following characteristics and structure:

a) an Executive Chair and Integrative Coordinators who would be responsible for managing the development and delivery of general education courses across the college;

b) the General Education Department would have faculty of its own and draw on faculty from other departments. In effect, the department would have a partially fluid membership, and the task of the Integrative Coordinators would be to liaise, advise and consult with the various other departments in the college;

c) the Department would be advised by the General Education Review Committee who would be appended to the new Program Review and Approval Committee (PAC);

d) the Review Committee would serve as primary resource to the General Education Department in developing general education standards, guidelines and curriculum, and adjudicating whether courses were

general education, while the General Education Department would administer and implement the Review Committee's guidelines;

e) there would be an Integrative Coordinator for each of the three broad general education content area;

f) the Department would be located in a Division responsible for providing academic resources and courses to students across the College.

General Education Course Development Committee

11. the College establish a transitional General Education Course Development Committee by the Fall 1993

    a) to develop the foundations course for Fall 1994. The membership would include: a representative from each of the three broad content areas, an ESL specialist, and a representative from each of three broad vocational areas: Trades and Applied Arts; Community, Health and Hospitality Services; and Business and Office Administration.

    b) to invite and assist a team of faculty largely from the Technology and Science Division to develop an interdisciplinary course in the area of "technology and civilization" and in the area of "trades and artisans in history", to serve as possible course offerings in the Science and Technology content area.

12. consistent with the commitments to making use of the distinctive strengths of the College and to minimizing the disruption of faculty, departments be invited to develop a general education course related to their profession and trade which could be offered to students in their own and other programs. (See "Curriculum Recommendations", Recommendation #9)

General Education Budget

13. the College establish a separate central budget for financing the general education requirement in programs and give high priority to allocating funding for general education and generic skills educational resources.

Human Resource Development

14. the College undertake the following with respect to its hiring criteria and staff training programs:

    a) ensure that administrators have, or be assisted in acquiring, college-level proficiency in generic skills as part of the college's hiring criteria (e.g. computer literacy);

    b) ask a joint union-management committee to consider whether faculty should be expected to have, or be assisted in acquiring, college-level proficiency in generic skills as part of the college's hiring criteria;

    c) ask Human Resources to consider the inclusion of a college-level generic skills component in the Teacher Training program and in training programs for newly hired administrators.

15. consistent with the revised mandate of the colleges and the need to redevelop curriculum, the Human Resources Department give high priority to providing the following:

    a) workshops and/or courses on generic skills training and on how to incorporate them in the areas of pedagogy, curriculum design and evaluation within vocational and general education courses;

    b) education and resources for developing curriculum that reflects both the more behavioral and the broader meanings of learning outcomes as well as the real diversity of approaches to curriculum design.

16. consistent with the commitment to maintain the present level of employment, the College develop a strategy for possible retraining which would include:

    a) offering interested faculty in vocational departments the opportunity to teach classes in other departments by working with the faculty currently teaching the courses; and/or inviting them to relocate in other departments;

    b) an initiative to obtain a local agreement in which a specified proportion of the 14 P.D. Leaves, totalling about $600,000.00, normally granted each year to faculty be dedicated to retraining faculty for generic skills training or general education;

c) approaching the CESC to set aside a significant portion of their funds for ensuring job retraining related to general education;

d) approaching a degree-granting institution to develop a program or series of programs to assist college faculty in strengthening their general education background and/or developing general education courses. This could be financed partially by individual faculty through the $250,000.00 distributed to Divisions to fund individual and collective professional development initiatives, and partially as a regional program supported by HRD in the Third Decade.

Vocationally Applied and Required General Education Courses

17. vocationally-applied general education courses be regarded as fulfilling a partial general education credit (e.g., we recommend a half semester credit) with limits established on the number of general education credits that can be obtained with such courses (e.g., we recommend two). The determination of which courses will qualify for this credit will be made by the General Education Review Committee.

18. courses which basically fulfill the criteria for general education content and pedagogy, but are regarded as "required" for broadening students entering into a specific profession or trade, rather than a possible elective option, be regarded as fulfilling a general eduction credit, with the condition that students have at least one elective option in a two-year program and two elective options in a three-year program.

Three Hours Per Week Courses

19. programs which currently offer four hour per week general education, generic skills or mixed elective courses, reduce the courses to three hours per week and use the hours to develop another course offering in the program. In some programs which may have sufficient general education to meet the CSAC requirement, the additional course could be used to offer an elective course from a vocational/generic skill menu, (e.g. Business electives) thereby minimizing faculty dislocation.

20. programs expand two hours per week general education courses to three hours per week in order to meet the increasing demand for transferability and

articulation among post-secondary institutions as well as to facilitate meeting the CSAC requirement of one three-hour per week course per semester.

Transitional Measures

21. as transitional measures in implementing the CSAC requirement of one general education course per semester on average, the following be effective until September, 1995:

a) programs where implementing the CSAC requirements regarding general education presents particular difficulties, be permitted to use a gradual phase-in process. The phase-in would begin in September 1994 by having one course in the first semester, adding one course in the second semester in January 1995, and adding one course each in the third and fourth semesters for September 1995. This has the advantage of addressing faculty and curriculum adjustment gradually.

b) programs that currently offer students electives drawn from a mixed menu of vocational, generic skills and general education courses over a number of semesters, divide the electives into a vocational/generic skills menu and a general education menu, and require students to select at least half their elective courses from the general education menu while courses are being developed and implemented for the three broad general education content areas;

c) broadly applicable vocational courses that offer transferable vocational knowledge and skills which are essential for career success across a wide range of occupations (e.g. small business management in Fashion, Technology, Allied Health programs, etc.) be regarded as "vocationally-applied general education" if their emphasis is on broad theory and principles (e.g., organizational behaviour, management theory, business principles), and "vocational generic skills" if their emphasis is on applied knowledge and skills (e.g. how to set up and manage a small business, bookkeeping, hiring, etc.).

22. the College establish a *pro tem* committee of stakeholders for discussing and sharing general education/generic skills implementation solutions, perhaps through the Chair's Committee.

College Commitment to a Balanced Education

23. to help students recognize the value of a broadened college education and adjust to curriculum change, the College work to create an environment which regards the general education and generic skills component to be integral and essential components of a balanced education; and that this be reflected in the attitudes of the staff, staff training and development opportunities, College marketing materials, advisory committee composition, etc.

24. the College mission statement be revised to include an expressed commitment to a "balanced education".

Implementation Plan and Timelines

25. that the Council of Deans, Chairs' Committee and the Vice-President Academic meet collectively in the Spring 1993 to develop a coherent strategy for implementing the above recommendations which would include the assignment of responsibilities and timelines.

VIII. GENERIC SKILLS

Because the Generic Skills Committee was not constituted until February 1993, its work is still in a preliminary stage.

The five focus groups of the Generic Skills Committee, each dealing with one of the generic skill areas, (communications, interpersonal, computer literacy, numeracy and analytic reasoning), are currently formulating recommendations which will come before the Generic Skills Committee and then to the General Education Task Force, for amendment and/or ratification.

While it would be premature to present any recommendations in this report, a summary of the initial work of the Generic Skills Committee is included in Appendix I. The Final Report of the General Education Task Force will include the completed recommendations of the Generic Skills Committee.

IX. WORK TO BE DONE

The tasks yet to be addressed by the General Education Task Force lie primarily in the areas of curriculum and generic skills.

The main curriculum challenge is to develop learning outcomes for general education courses and, related to this, to find a curriculum model which is compatible with the educational goals of general education. Other curriculum objectives of the Task Force are to identify appropriate pedagogical methods and assessment tools and to define how and what generic skills will be integrated into general education courses.

As stated in the previous chapter, the work on generic skills is in a formative stage. More time is required to permit careful consideration and resolution of some of the issues before it. Essentially, the expected proficiency in each generic skill at each post-secondary semester level needs to be defined and appropriate delivery modes identified.

The General Education Task Force will have finished its work and submitted its complete recommendations by December 1993.

APPENDICES

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX "A"

GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE

DRAFT PROPOSAL

I. MANDATE

The mandate of the General Education Task Force is to research, develop and recommend general education policy at George Brown College.

Specifically, the Task Force will develop:

a. a philosophy of general education for George Brown College;

b. a post-secondary general education cuuriculum;

c. a general education course approval and review process; and

d. an implementation plan.

II. TASK FORCE STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP

a. The Task Force will have representation from each post-secondary division.

b. The Task Force will be comprised, over time, of students, administrators, support staff and faculty.

c. Each member shall identify an alternate, who can serve in his/her stead if the need arises. The member will be responsible for apprising the alternate of the work of the Task Force on a regular basis.

d. In addition to participating in the discussion and decision-making activities of the regular meetings, members will be expected to do background reading and research and to be prepared to undertake subcommittee work.

e. It is expected that support staff representatives shall be freed from their responsibilities without penalty to attend regular meetings; that faculty representatives shall be given time on their SWFs in recognition of their work on the Task Force; and that administrative representatives shall be able to negotiate a meaningful reduction or accommodation to their regular workload.

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f. From time to time, as appropriate, resource persons will be invited to participate in the Task Force, e.g. members of general education task forces in other colleges, contributors to relevant parts of Vision 2000 or CSAC documents, OISE staff, etc.

g. Meetings of the Task Force shall be open, and any interested member of the College community may attend as a guest by notifying one of the co-chairs.

h. The Task Force shall meet twice a month.

i. The Task Force shall be of a size to get work done and make decisions. Broad based input and consultation can be accommodated by
- holding open meetings as specified in e.,
- regular reporting of members to the constituents they represent, and
- inviting submissions and presentations to the Task Force.

j. On the whole, subcommittees will be formed on an ad hoc basis to address issues which require concentrated focus. However, a Research Subcommittee and a Secretariat will be permanent parts of the Task Force structure.

III. TIMELINE

a. Task Force constituted — late May 1992

b. Initial discussion and orientation to issues; Confirmation of timelines for 1992 - 1993; Identification of initial research activities. — end-June 1992

c. Reports on initial research re: philosophy and curriculum — mid-October 1992

d. Draft statement of philosophy; Identification of second stage of research re: curriculum — mid-November 1992

e. Development of general education curriculum — mid-March 1993

f. Identification of third stage of research re: mechanisms and approval criteria — mid-April 1993

g. Implementation plan developed including establishment of on-going mechanisms for approval and review — end-May 1993

h. FINAL REPORT - submitted to Vice-President Academic — end-June 1993

IV. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

a. It is expected that George Brown College will have a philosophy of general education that has been guided by Vision 2000, CSAC documents and GBC's "General Education Guidelines". The philosophy will include clarification of key terms and concepts, a statement of the nature and aims of general education and a statement of educational principles pertaining to general education.

b. It is also expected that GBC will have a post-secondary general education curriculum, endorsed by the College community, that specifies: guidelines for the development of course objectives; modes of delivery; content; learning outcomes in the areas of knowledge and skills; levels of courses; evaluation methods and jurisdictional responsibility.

c. It is also expected that GBC will have a general education curriculum committee to oversee the course approval and review process and will have developed a statement of approval criteria.

d. Finally, it is expected that GBC will have a general education implementation plan for all post-secondary programs that will include critical dates.

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION BY STEERING COMMITTEE

1. What work should the Task Force do with regard to generic skills?

2. Should the mandate of the Task Force include non post-secondary programs?

3. Is it necessary to outline the basic duties and responsibilities of the co-chairs?

4. Should the Task Force structure also specify the reporting structure and/or the process/committees/councils where the recommendations will be discusssed, endorsed and approved?

5. Should the Task Force address jurisdictional and curriculum hours issues?

December, 1992.

An Open Letter to the George Brown College Community from the Members of the General Education Task Force.

The development of the Academic Plan for our college is well under way, and part of the work is being undertaken by four Task Forces--Access and Student Services; General Education; Learning Resources; and Programs.

The Mandate

The mandate of the General Education Task Force is to research, develop and recommend a general education policy for GBC in accordance with the guidelines and recommendations of VISION 2000 and CSAC. Specifically, the Task Force is is developing

- a philosophy statement
- post-secondary curriculum guidelines
- a course approval and review process, and
- an implementation plan regarding general education.

Similar work on generic skills will be handled by a Subcommittee of this Task Force in collaboration with representatives from the other Task Forces.

How To Participate

Although we anticipate presenting an initial draft of the Task Force recommendations to the college community for responses in the spring, input and consultation are welcome even at this formative stage.

- The Task Force meetings are open. Please tell either of the co-chairs if you want to attend and be prepared to do any necessary background work if you want to actively participate in the meetings.

- In addition, members of the Task Force are available to discuss the issues with you, and to report on the activities of the Task Force at Divisional or Departmental meetings.

- Finally, we welcome any written submissions, although it is important that submissions recognize the Task Force is addressing its mandate within the parameters set out by the CSAC Establishment Board Report (July, 1992) and other Ministry guidelines as they emerge.

(over)

We trust we have given you some indication of what the General Education Task Force has been doing and look forward to sharing our recommendations with you.

Anne Carr, Chair, Business Administration
Dorothy Ellis, Chair, Hospitality
Bruno Fullone, Faculty, Math and Science
Marilyn Grant, Faculty, Nursing
Roger Grewal, Faculty, Technology
Maureen Hynes, Coordinator, Access and School of Labour
Kay Kazuba, Faculty, Fashion
John King, Coordinator, Graphic Arts
Louise Kruithof, Coordinator, Architectural Technology
Ed Ksenych, Coordinator, Liberal Studies (Task Force co-chair)
Bob Luker, Faculty, Community Worker
Marilou Martin, Support, Local 557 President
Jo Ann Mastrotucci, Student, Community Services
Marcia Pulleybank, Library Services
Susan Sheehan, Coordinator, Office Administration
Marianne Taylor, Faculty, English and Liberal Studies,
and College Council Chair (Task Force co-chair)
Gary Waters, Faculty, Science and Technology
Hilde Zimmer, Coordinator, Women in Trades and Technology

Appendix C

PRESENTATIONS TO THE GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE

- Clive Cockerton (General Education Coordinator, Humber College) on the Humber College General Education Task Force, October 7, 1993
- Kim Culkin and Lynne Mulder, GBC Programs Task Force, on the "Quality Scan", program review process, February 17, 1993
- Sylvie Landry (Francophone Staff Person to CSAC) and Norm Rowen (CSAC/Council of Regents Staff Person) on General Education and Generic Skills: Clarification of CSAC expectations", March 15, 1993
- Maureen Hynes, (GBC School of Labour Coordinator) on "Curriculum Models: A critique of Competency-Based Learning", March 15, 1993
- Tom Malcomson, English and Liberal Studies/Distance Education Project, GBC, on "Instructional Delivery Modes: Distance Education - Realities, Challenges and Issues Arising", March 15, 1993
- Ron Sheese, Centre for Academic Writing, York University, on "Pedagogy, Curriculum and Learning Outcomes: Formulating and Evaluating Critical Skills", March 16, 1993

Appendix D

OTHER RESOURCE PERSONS CONSULTED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE

- George Burton, Registrar, George Brown College
- Will Creighton, Professor of Philosophy (retired), Toronto
- Lois Gaspar, General Education Review Committee, Conestoga College
- William Hanna, Chair, Human Studies, Humber College
- Nancy Jackson, Faculty of Education, McGill University/Co-Managing Director, Autoparts Service Training Council
- Sally Layton, Director, Human Resources, George Brown College
- Jim Turk, Education Director, Ontario Federation of Labour
- Jim Turner, Senior Administrative Vice President, George Brown College
- Barry S. Warren, Consultant on Public and Private Educational Funding, Chicago, Illinois

Appendix E

PRESENTATIONS MADE REGARDING THE WORK OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE

TO GBC COLLEGE COMMITTEES, DEPARTMENTS AND DIVISIONS

- Educational Resources Retreat, November 1992
- Department of Fashion Technology, December 16, 1992
- Council of Deans, January 21, 1993
- College Council, January 14, 1993
- Chairs Committee, February 24, 1993
- Quality Scan Information Session (St. James)
  February 25, 1993
- Quality Scan Information Session (Casa Loma)
  February 26, 1993
- English and Liberal Studies Department, St. James
  March 1, 1993
- English and Liberal Studies Department, Casa Loma
  March 5, 1993
- Math and Science P.D. Event, St. James, March 17, 1993
- College Employment Stability Committee, April 5, 1993
- Department of Graphic Arts, April 16, 1993

APPENDIX "F"

Nursing

	Course Name	Semest. Number	Delivery Dept.	Vocat-ional	Generic Skills	General Educ.	Vocat. Applied	Req'd.	Elective (GE-Only Menu)	Elective (GE/GS/V Menu)	Course Hours	% Total Hours
NU111	Nurs. The. I	1	HS	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	114.00	0.04
NU112	Nurs. Practicum I	1	HS	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	78.00	0.03
NU113	Human Relat.	1	HS	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	32.00	0.01
ANAT113	Anat./Physiol. I	1	T	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	64.00	0.02
PSY115	Devel. Psych.	1	E&LS	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	48.00	0.02
COMM120	College English	1	E&LS	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	51.00	0.02
NU121	Nurs. The. II	2	HS	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	64.00	0.02
NU122	Nurs. Practicum II	2	HS	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	192.00	0.07
PATH121	Pathol./Therap. I	2	HS	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	32.00	0.01
ANAT123	Anat./Physiol. II	2	T	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	64.00	0.02
PSY125	Gen. Psych.	2	E&LS	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	32.00	0.01
HUMN126	... Religion/Moral Issues	2	E&LS	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	32.00	0.01
NU231	Nurs. The. III	3	HS	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	64.00	0.02
NU232	Nurs. Practicum III	3	HS	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	288.00	0.11
PATH232	Pathol./Therap. I	3	HS	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	40.00	0.02
HUMN237	... Philos./Moral Issues	3	E&LS	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	32.00	0.01

	Course Name	Semest. Number	Delivery Dept.	Vocat-ional	Generic Skills	General Educ.	Vocat. Applied	Req'd.	Elective (GE-Only Menu)	Elective (GE/GS/V Menu)	Course Hours	% Total Hours
NU241	Nurs. The. IV	4	HS	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	64.00	0.02
NU242	Nurs. Practicum IV	4	HS	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	288.00	0.11
PATH243	Pathol./Therap. III	4	HS	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	32.00	0.01
SOC240	Intro. Sociol.	4	E&LS	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	48.00	0.02
NU351	Nurs. The. V	5	HS	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	72.00	0.03
NU352	Nurs. Practicum V	5	HS	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	288.00	0.11
PATH354	Pathol./Therap. IV	5	HS	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	48.00	0.02
ELECT000	Elective	5		0	0	0	0	0	0	1	32.00	0.01
NU361	Nurs. The. VI	6	HS	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	15.00	0.01
NU362	Nurs. Practicum VI	6	HS	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	525.00	0.20

Coding Decision Rules

General Information:

- The survey population includes all full-time, post-secondary programs, as indicated in the 1993/94 George Brown College calendar and GBC March 3, 1993 database printout.

- "Delivery Department" and "Course Hours" figures are derived from the GBC central database.

- Categorization of courses as "Vocational:, "Generic Skills", or "General Education" was made using the General Education Task Force's definitions (refer to attached document, "Coding Information Sheet"). Coding decisions are based on presumptions of course content, by virtue of the course name, within the given program context.

- Program Chairs or Coordinators were given the opportunity of reviewing and modifying coding decisions of courses in their program areas before data analysis was undertaken.

- Final coding decisions, in an effort to improve reliability and consistency of the data, were made by the GE Task Force Chairs prior to the data analysis and report preparation.

Required Courses:

- "Technical Reports", "Formal Reports", "Business Writing" and "Report Writing" courses are coded as Generic Skills and Vocationally Applied.

- Broadly applicable vocational courses essential for career success across a wide range of occupations (for example, "Small Business Management" or "Accounting") are coded as Generic Skills and Vocationally Applied.

- Generic Skills or General Education courses are coded as Vocationally Applied when it could be presumed that the course has a high degree of occupational specificity.

- The first two semesters of "Introductory" Generic Skills or General Education are coded as such. The following semesters offering similarly-named courses are coded as Vocational (i.e., presuming that there is greater occupational specificity in the more advanced, similarly-named courses).

Appendix "H"

IDEAS AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL EDUCATION AND GENERIC SKILLS IN A PROGRAM

1. Introduce general education and generic skills within a context of broad and thorough restructuring and reorienting of the program. Explore what aspects of general education, generic skills, and vocational content and skills training can be consolidated, reorganized or restructured.

2. Explore the possibility of supplementing courses, where appropriate, with modular/Individualized learning programs. Libraries and other college learning resource centres (e.g., the Math and Science or the English and Liberal Studies LRCs) could provide enrichment and augment learning.

3. Identify program hours and content devoted to remediation and develop a departmental or college mechanism for addressing remedial needs outside of program hours, where reasonable.

4. Consult with employers to determine their willingness to provide on-the-job training for very job-specific skill components. (t should be noted that this recommendation is not that the college turn over its work to the private sector. It is proposing that program hours be utilized for transferable occupational training rather than to meet a local on-the-job requirement of a particular employer.)

5. In consultation with the delivery department, consider whether more than two semesters of communication, math or other generic skills are needed in two-year programs to meet the standards currently being formulated by the Generic Skills Subcommittee, assuming that the student is not in need of remediation and the program is not highly oriented to that generic skill.

6. Examine if a portion of generic skills training currently delivered through discrete courses in your program can be effectively infused through vocational and general education courses or met through learning resource centres.

7. Consider replacing "vocationally applied" or "tailored" general education courses with "pure" general education by shifting responsibility for vocational application of general education content to the vocational theory and practicum courses, for example, replacing as sociology for nurses course with an general sociology course. This has the added advantage of enhancing the transportability of the courses with other post-secondary institutions.

8. Examine similar programs in other colleges that allocate fewer hours to vocational courses to find out how the vocational content is handled from the perspective of course and curriculum design, instructional mode and hours utilized.

9. Examine similar programs in other colleges that allocate longer hours to vocational content to see if your program length is currently adequate to meet the vocational skills, knowledge and attitude outcomes that are required for entry into an occupation. Can a case be made to the Ministry for lengthening a program by one or two semesters in order to meet the occupational entrance requirements?

10. Consider replacing combined elective offerings (vocational/generic skills/general education) with general education only.

11. If feasible, examine whether the program can be lengthened to 18 week semesters to provide more time in vocational courses to accommodate vocational content displaced by introducing general education.

APPENDIX "I"

PROGRESS REPORT:

THE GENERIC SKILLS SUBCOMMITTEE

OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION TASK FORCE

APRIL 18, 1993

ABSTRACT

The Generic Skills subcommittee was constituted under Patricia Groves and reports to the General Education Task Force. It began its work late in February. The subcommittee met, discussed and approved a method of operation. That method was to set up five focus groups each working on one of the five generic skills areas determined by CSAC. Those areas are: communications, computer literacy, analytical skills including critical thinking and problem solving, numeracy, and interpersonal skills. Each focus group is constituted with college staff with expertise in that particular skill. The focus groups are preparing presentations for the Generic Skills Committee. Those presentations will consist of descriptions of the generic skill concerned for graduates at the end of one, two and three year programs. The descriptions are meant to apply to any George Brown graduate and thus are not to be tied to any particular program of study. This work is in anticipation of the work CSAC has mandated for its yet to be constituted Generic Skills Council. The focus groups will also make recommendations as to how these skills outcomes might be reached. The Generic Skills subcommittee, with representation from various departments across the college, will discuss, amend and revise what is presented to it before the work is passed on to the General Education Task Force. Focus group members will be invited to participate in those discussions. The recommendations will be open to further revision once they are circulated amongst members of the college community. Once a college position is arrived at, George Brown will be able to submit the results of the process to CSAC for consultation as it wrestles with the same issues.

Four focus groups were set up on computer literacy, analytical skills, communications, and interpersonal skills. The Remedial Mathematics Project Steering Committee asked to work on numeracy and thus became the fifth focus group. All the groups have produced provisional descriptions of the graduates and a preliminary list of skills.

Several important issues have arisen in the process. The first is whether or not the generic skills discussed have a post-secondary quality. Are the basic, generic skills for a graduate irrespective of program simply the ideal high school graduate standards or do they presuppose building upon those standards to take students to a more sophisticated level? If high school numeracy and language competence are sufficient basic levels for graduates irrespective of program, is being sure that graduates of George Brown meet certain generic skills levels essentially a process or remediation? If generic skills at the college are post-secondary, when and how are these skills to be developed to advanced levels? Another issue is the degree of overlap. Some skills presuppose that students have others. Good communication skills, for example, are intimately connected with coherent thought. The analytical skills and interpersonal skills focus groups converge on the need for graduates to examine their assumptions and identity the origin of their values. Considering this overlap, how should these skills interrelate in the college curriculum?

Most of the groups have made recommendations regarding implementation. Two major recommendations common to the groups are that :

1. the total college environment should foster the development of the generic skills; and

2. a permanent generic skills committee with a broad membership from across the college should be set up to assist departments to implement development of the five generic skills areas as determined by CSAC.

A great many people on staff at the college have generously given their time to work on these and other questions. The discussions are always stimulating. Although the process just got under way two months ago, important issues have been clarified, some provisional definitions and descriptions have been made, and some implementation methods have been suggested. It is the commitment of the focus group members that has made this progress possible.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Generic Skills subcommittee was set up during the last two weeks of February 1993. Focus groups which will report to the subcommittee on specific skill areas have worked for nearly two months. A first progress report was issued March 18. It outlined the process and work to date. This report restates the basic information of the first progress report for the benefit of the college community and includes updates on the work of the focus groups.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The Academic Plan Steering Committee requested in late 1992 that the General Education Task Force work on generic skills in addition to dealing with general education issues. Minutes for the November 19, 1992 General Education Task Force meeting state:

> The Steering Committee requested that this committee take on generic skills as part of our mandate and to create a Generic Skills Subcommittee which would develop a philosophy and definitions, with particular emphasis on interpersonal skills and analytic skills, the definition of which is more controversial than literacy, numeracy etc.

Minutes from the January 21, 1993 meeting record that the proposed subcommittee was then being constituted under Patricia Groves according to suggestions made by the General Education Task Force at an Academic Plan Steering Committee retreat. Peter Lovrick, from the English and Liberal Studies Department at Casa Loma, was asked to chair the subcommittee and co-ordinate the process. The Generic Skills Subcommittee met for the first time on February 17 to discuss a method of working and committee membership.

3.0 PROCESS

3.1 DEFINITION

The Generic Skills subcommittee is a General Education Committee work group set up to develop a discussion paper with recommendations on generic skills at George Brown College. That paper will be part of the submissions of the various committees focused on the academic plan.

3.2 PURPOSE

The General Education Committee has asked the Generic Skills subcommittee to look at generic skills as designated in the College Standards and Accreditation Committee (CSAC) report. CSAC has divided generic skills into five areas:

1. language literacy
2. numeracy
3. computer literacy
4. interpersonal relations
5. analytical skills including critical thinking and problem solving

CSAC itself will describe what college students are expected to achieve in these five areas over the course of a program. George Brown in developing its vision now will be able to make a valuable contribution to the CSAC process later.

3.3 METHOD

1. Each of the generic skills areas determined by CSAC will be looked at by a focus group. The focus group membership is made up of those with expertise. This first step will produce discussion papers.

2. Each focus group will present its position to the subcommittee. The subcommittee, with representatives from across the college, will look at the focus group proposals in the broad context of George Brown. The subcommittee will then pass on its conclusions to the General Education committee.

3.4 SPECIFIC TASKS

3.4.1 FOCUS GROUPS

Each focus group will determine:

1. standards for the specific generic skills to be reached at the end of post-secondary programs;

2. how the generic skills should be included in a course of study.

3.4.2 SUBCOMMITTEE

The subcommittee will:

1. hear presentations by each of the five subgroups;

2. discuss the descriptions and proposals in the context of the college as a whole, rather than in the context of one specific program;

3. work towards consensus positions;

4. write five final position papers for consideration by the General Education Committee and for inclusion with the work produced for the Academic Plan.

3.5 CONCLUSION

The product of this work is not meant to be definitive. It will be included in a report to be widely circulated throughout the college. Doubtless, feedback will suggest modifications before the descriptions and implementation plans become college policy. In this way, just as the focus groups will present discussion papers to the subcommittee, the subcommittee will present a discussion paper to the college community.

4.0 MEMBERSHIP

4.1 GENERIC SKILLS SUBCOMMITTEE

JENNIFER BOLT (representing Anne Mackenzie)	E & LS
AL BUDZIN	ACADEMIC SKILLS
ANNE CARR	BUSINESS
HARRY CHONG	STUDENT TECHNOLOGY
SEAN DONOVAN	TECHNOLOGY
FRAN DUNGEY	STAFF DEVELOPMENT
DOROTHY ELLIS	HOSPITALITY
ANNE FLEMING-READ	TECHNOLOGY
ITA GRANT	LIBRARY SERVICES
MARILYN GRANT	DIPLOMA NURSING
ROGER GREWAL	TECHNOLOGY
RICK GRAYSTON	TECHNOLOGY
PAUL HOLLOW	COUNSELLING
KAY KASZUBA	FASHION
FRED KNITTEL	FASHION
LOUISE KRUITHOF	TECHNOLOGY
PETER LOVRICK	E & LS
SHEILA MACMILLAN	EDUCATIONAL ACCESS
MALCOLM MACNEIL	REMEDIAL MATH
MARGRET MCCOLLUM	ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE
(represented Doug Jull)	
LINDA OAKES	COMMUNITY SERVICES
KAY OXFORD	E & LS
DAVID PARKER	E & LS
MARILYN RINALDO	CON. ED.
DOUG STULLA	ALLIED HEALTH
SUSAN STYLIANOS	STUDENT SERVICES
BARBARA TAYLOR	TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT
MARIANNE TAYLOR	E & LS
MARGUERITE WALES	EDUCATIONAL ACCESS

4.2 COMPUTER LITERACY FOCUS GROUP

PAUL BALOG	MATH & SCIENCE
JENNIFER BOLT	E & LS (CL)
ANNE CARR	BUSINESS
DOUG COWLING	E & LS
WINSTON CHEUNG	INFORMATION SYSTEMS
PETER GOULDING	CAL CENTRE
AVRILLE HEADLY	E & LS (CL)
WILLIAM JURANIC	TECHNOLOGY
PETER LOVRICK	E & LS (CL)
JACKIE RAMO	EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

4.3 INTERPERSONAL SKILLS FOCUS GROUP

JOHANNE CLARE	E & LS
BARBARA DYCE	ACADEMIC SKILLS
FRAN DUNGEY	STAFF DEVELOPMENT
PETER LOVRICK	E & LS
LINDA OAKES	COMMUNITY SERVICES
KAY OXFORD	E & LS
SHEILA MACMILLAN	SPECIAL NEEDS
BARBARA PIMENTO	ECE
CLAIRE VICTOR-SMITH	STUDENT SERVICES
BARBARA TAYLOR	TRAINING/EMPLOYMENT

4.4 COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOCUS GROUP

KENT BAKER	E & LS ST. JAMES
JENNIFER BOLT	E & LS CASA LOMA
DOUG COWLING	E & LS ST. JAMES
DAVID FOOTE	ACADEMIC SKILLS
PETER LOVRICK	E & LS CASA LOMA
PAUL MISKIN	E & LS (N/K)
NANCY NEWGREN	E & LS CASA LOMA
PETER SANDERS	E & LS CASA LOMA

4.5 ANALYTICAL SKILLS (CRITICAL THINKING, PROBLEM SOLVING) FOCUS GROUP

HOWARD GERHARD	E & LS
JUDY HERNANDEZ	ACCESS
DOUG HOPE	ACCESS
FRED KNITTEL	FURNITURE
ED KSENYCH	E & LS
ED KUNTZ	ESL
PETER LOVRICK	E & LS
JOHN LUCKMAN	E & LS
LINA MEDAGLIA	E & LS
PAUL MISKIN	E & LS
MARIANNE TAYLOR	E & LS

4.6 NUMERACY FOCUS GROUP

The Remedial Mathematics Project Steering Committee chaired by Malcolm MacNeil is looking at developing remediation and a core mathematics course at George Brown. It began meeting early in February before the Generic Skills Subcommittee was constituted. It is made up mathematics professors and administrators. That group decided that it would take on the task of the numeracy focus group since it has already been constituted with the expertise and has already begun looking in the area of defining and describing generic numeracy skills.

GREG ANOZIE	COMPUTER SCIENCE (CL)
PAUL BALOG	MATH & SCIENCE (SJ)
KATHY DOWNEY	ALLIED HEALTH (CL)
BRUNO FULLONE	APPLIED STUDIES (SJ)
MARIA GRANSHAW	MATH & SCIENCE (K)
PETER LOVRICK	E & LS (CL)
ANNE MACKENZIE	E & LS (SJ)
MALCOLM MACNEIL	ELECTRONICS (K)
KAY SINGH	MATH & SCIENCE(SJ)
DON ST. JEAN	MATH & SCIENCE (SJ)
RON WALDIE	ACADEMIC DEAN
DIANE WARDROPE	MATH & SCIENCE (SJ)
GARY WATERS	MECHANICAL SYSTEMS (CL)

5.0 WORK IN PROGRESS

5.1 COMPUTER LITERACY FOCUS GROUP

5.1.1 SKILLS

DESCRIPTION OF COMPUTER LITERACY OF THE GRADUATE

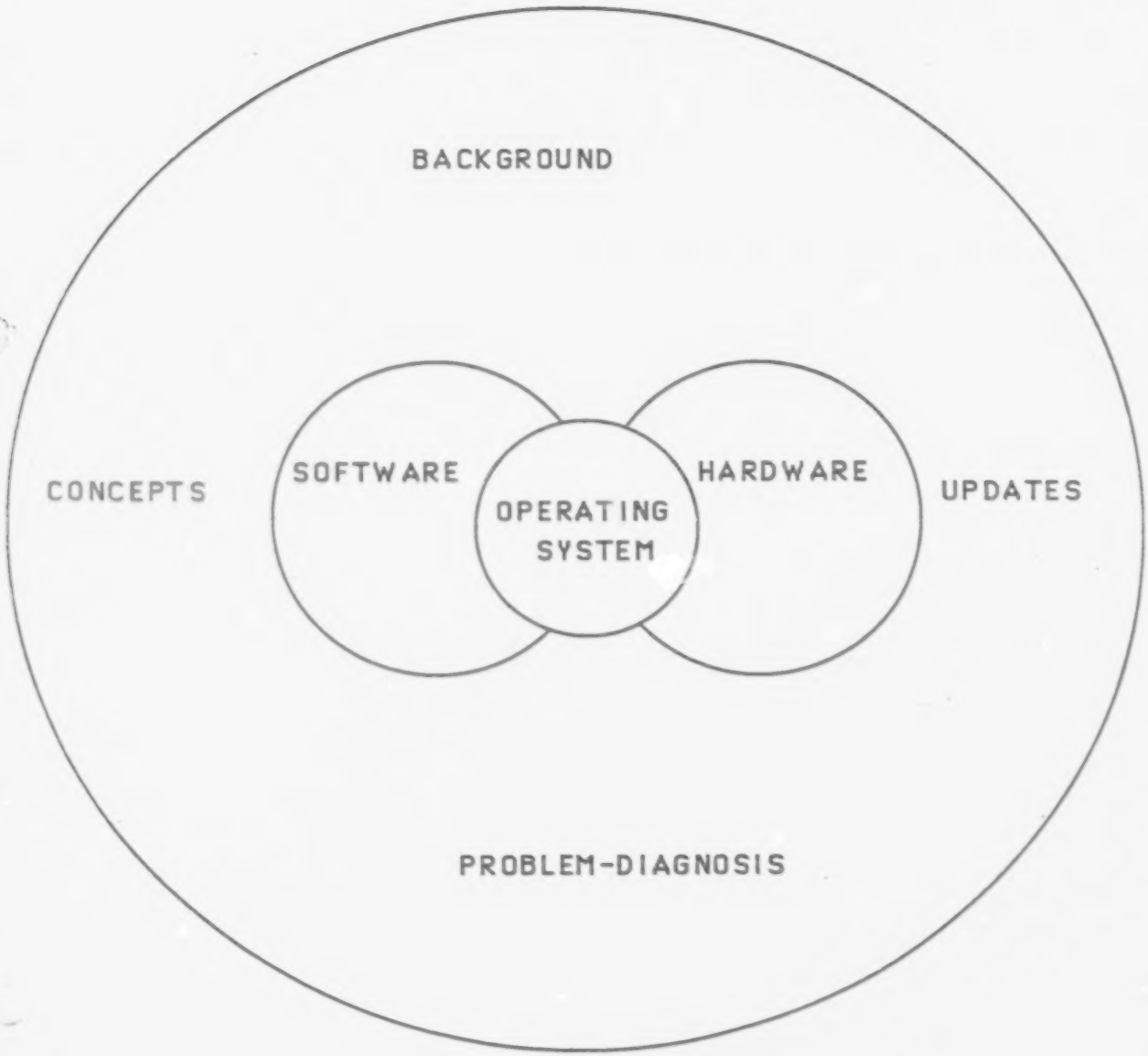
Graduates will have acquired computer literacy for academic, personal and professional needs. They will understand concepts necessary to computer literacy and will demonstrate the skills necessary to word processing, using spread sheets, data base management and communications with computers.

1. BASIC HARDWARE
   - *Theoretical background
   - *How components integrate
   - *Keyboard work.

2. OPERATING SYSTEM (e.g. DOS, SYSTEM 7, OS II)
   - *Theoretical background
   - *Managing
     - searching
     - retrieving
     - storing
     - sending

3. SOFTWARE
   - *Word Processing -writing
   - *Spread Sheet - calculating
   - *Data Base - manipulation
   - *Telecommunications - networking

4. PROBLEM - DIAGNOSIS
   - * To whom do you talk?


BACKGROUND
CONCEPTS
SOFTWARE
OPERATING SYSTEM
HARDWARE
UPDATES
PROBLEM-DIAGNOSIS

5.1.2 IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The computer literacy focus group recommends that:

1. the college foster computer literacy among the college staff. To accomplish this goal, the college could:

    1.1 make training in computer literacy a condition of employment when hiring (to be referred to a joint union-management committee for consultation);

    1.2 offer professional development on computers to professors;

2. the college provide students with more access to computers;

3. the college develop a computer environment for students. This goal could be accomplished by:

    3.1 requiring students to use word processing for communications and/or other course work where reasonable in the first semester;

    3.2 requiring students to use spread sheets in connection with mathematics and/or other course material where reasonable before the end of the second semester;

4. students enrolled in a one year program should develop basic word processing and spread sheet skills;

5. students in the second year of a two year program should develop advanced computer skills to become more proficient users of appropriate word processing, spread sheet and graphics programs;

6. students in the third year of a three year program should develop the skills to integrate word processing, spread sheet and graphics programs into a single work;

7. a permanent generic skills committee with a broad membership from across the college should oversee the embedding of computer literacy skills and act as the approval mechanism for various methods of developing these skills as determined by college departments;

8. the college should develop alternative methods of implementation of computer literacy skills to offer departments in the event that they wish to choose from them as opposed to developing their own mechanisms. Such offerings could include:

8.1 independent learning modules in a resource centre as a supplement to a course requiring work done on a computer;

8.2 a discrete course in basic or advanced computer literacy that could be delivered in varying lengths;

8.3 referrals to Continuing Education courses.

5.2 INTERPERSONAL SKILLS FOCUS GROUP

5.2.1 SKILLS

DESCRIPTION OF INTERPERSONAL SKILLS FOR THE GRADUATE

Graduates will have the necessary intrapersonal and interpersonal skills to make appropriate choices to function effectively in interpersonal and intercultural contacts. Students will have looked at the skills content from personal, social and cultural perspectives.

INTRAPERSONAL SKILLS

GOAL: understanding the self

1. understanding one's values

2. understanding one's feelings

    *identification
    *triggers
    *disclosure

3. understanding self-image

    *personal boundaries
    *concepts of personal responsibility
    *self-acceptance
    *awareness of own body language
    *self-esteem
    *roles

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

FOR ONE ON ONE AND GROUPS

1. communication

    *hearing vs. listening
    *interpreting body language
    *understanding context

2. conflict-resolution

3. self assertion vs. aggression (not a "how to" approach, but an understanding of different perspectives so that students can choose which approach is appropriate for them culturally and personally).

4. respect for diversity

5. common courtesy

5.2.2 IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION PROPOSALS

The interpersonal skills focus group recommends that:

1. the college foster an environment where interpersonal skills are part of the general college culture. These skills should be part of all vocational, generic skills and general educational courses. To accomplish this goal the college could:

    1.1 make training in interpersonal skills a condition of employment when hiring (to be referred to a joint management-union committee for consideration);

    1.2 offer professional development to professors on incorporating interpersonal skills in curriculum.

2. departments across the college should embed interpersonal skills into their programs to reflect the college commitment to generic skills;

3. the college adopt the focus group's basic interpersonal skills list as generic to one year programs;

4. Advanced applications of these basic skills to professional situations depending on suitability and on how best the applications can be integrated with the program should make up the content of second and third year development of interpersonal skills.

5. a permanent generic skills committee with a broad membership from across the college should oversee the embedding of analytical skills and act as the approval mechanism for various methods of developing these skills as determined by college departments;

6. Departments throughout the college should devise and make cases for their own ways of implementing these advanced applications. Some methods could include:

6.1. assessment of interpersonal skills in field placements;
6.2. inviting guest speakers from professional organizations to speak to students on topics with an interpersonal skills focus;
6.3. inviting expertise from the college to speak to students on interpersonal skills at appropriate times in vocational courses as guest lecturers;

7. the college should develop alternative methods of implementation of the basic interpersonal skills to offer departments in the event that they wish to choose from them as opposed to developing their own mechanisms. Such offerings could include:

7.1 a discrete course delivered in varying lengths;
7.2 workshops on specific interpersonal skills.

7.2.1. The skills could be grouped, organized and presented in a series of workshops and lectures.

7.2.2. The special workshops and lectures could be introduced into the basic communications course (COMM 120), the foundation General Education course, or any vocational course when appropriate to course content.

7.2.3. Professors at the college with expertise in these skills could make up a bank of guest speakers that would have a number of workshops included on their SWF's as teaching assignments.

5.3 COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOCUS GROUP

5.3.1 SKILLS

GENERIC COMMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR THE GEORGE BROWN GRADUATE

Graduates will demonstrate an ability to both acquire and express orally and in writing information and ideas necessary to their academic, personal and professional needs. They will develop the advanced communication skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking with complex, college level content. Graduates will further demonstrate an integration of effective communication skills with critical thinking and interpersonal skills.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

*** ACQUIRING**	
*listening *reading	-Students will develop active listening and reading to a level at which the graduate can accurately, recapitulate, paraphrase, summarize and assimilate advanced college level content.
*** ORGANIZING**	-Students will distinguish between relevant and irrelevant, appropriate and inappropriate information and ideas for the development of a purpose. They will select and arrange information and ideas in a coherent and effective order.
*** EXPRESSING**	
*writing *speaking	-Students will express ideas clearly and coherently suitable for the audience, including post-secondary and professional ones, using standard English.

APPLIED SKILLS

* STUDY SKILLS	-Students will develop effective text reading, note-taking, listening, and testing skills appropriate for advanced college level content.
* RESEARCH	-Students will develop library skills necessary to their academic, personal and professional needs. They will demonstrate an ability to acquire and accurately document information from a variety of sources outside of the library.

5.3.2 IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. General Education and Vocational courses should include where appropriate and reasonable a significant part of their assessment from work requiring written and oral presentation skills.

2. Communication skills should be developed in discrete program of courses running concurrently and in partnership with professional programs and taught by specialized faculty educated in language and communication.

5.4 ANALYTICAL SKILLS: CRITICAL THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING FOCUS GROUP

5.4.1 SKILLS

DESCRIPTION OF REASONING SKILLS INCLUDING CRITICAL THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING FOR THE GBC GRADUATE BASED ON DISCUSSIONS IN THE MEETINGS

The goal of developing generic thinking skills at the college is to enable the student to develop a predisposition for clear thinking and a willingness to question. To arrive at this goal, graduates develop their thinking faculties in two main ways both of which involve measurable skills. They have developed the ability both to evaluate arguments and examine assumptions and reasoning. They have learned to apply these faculties to both problem solving and problem posing so that they may engage the world, both personally and professionally, in a reasoned and questioning manner. Graduates have further learned to consider and evaluate alternatives when making decisions, choices and judgements.

A PRELIMINARY BREAKDOWN OF SKILLS BASED ON DISCUSSION

BASIC SKILLS OF SOUND REASONING

1. recognizing fallacies
2. identifying and questioning assumptions and relationships
3. distinguishing between premise and conclusion
4. distinguishing between opinion and fact
5. prioritizing in situations of conflict (e.g. values, goals)
6. reasoning inductively and deductively

BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SOUND REASONING

1. respect for persons
2. readiness to consider alternative explanations
3. care for the procedures of inquiry
4. readiness to listen
5. habit of judicious suspension of assent
6. habit of self-appraisal

APPLICATIONS

1. ethics
2. scientific method
3. aesthetics
4. logic
5. practical reasoning, trouble-shooting and problem solving

5.4.2 IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The reasoning skills (including critical thinking and problem solving) focus group recommends that:

1. the college foster an environment where analytic reasoning, critical thinking and problem solving are part of the general college culture. These skills should be part of all vocational, generic skills and general educational courses. To accomplish this goal the college should:

    1.1 make training in analytic reasoning, critical thinking and problem solving a condition of employment when hiring college staff (to be referred to a joint management-union committee for consideration in the case of faculty or support staff);

    1.2 offer professional development on incorporating thinking skills in curriculum.

2. the college adopt the focus group's basic skills of sound reasoning list as generic to one year programs or the first year of longer programs and that the knowledge based content be delivered by the end of the second term;

3. the college should develop alternative methods of delivering the knowledge based content of the basic skills of sound reasoning to offer departments in the event that they wish to choose from them as opposed to developing their own mechanisms. Such offerings could include:

    3.1 a discrete course delivered in varying lengths;
    3.2 workshops on specific thinking skills;
    3.3 independent learning modules focused on thinking skills as a supplement to work done in common classes (e.g. communications and foundation general education);
    3.4 a pool of college staff with expertise to act as resource persons as needed.

4. departments across the college should embed reasoning skills into their programs to reflect the college commitment to generic skills. Course outlines should include generic skills objectives which in turn should be a component of the final assessment for the student;

5. the second and third years of a program should apply the basic skills of sound reasoning in the scientific method, aesthetics, ethics, logic, practical reasoning, trouble-shooting or problem solving depending on suitability and on how best the applications can be integrated with the program;

6. departments consider alternative teaching methodologies that foster the use and development of reasoning and other skills. Examples of alternative methodologies are the case-study and the problem solving approach in delivering course content (see attachment);

7. a permanent generic skills committee with a broad membership from across the college and with expertise in the generic skills should oversee the embedding of analytical skills and act as the approval mechanism for various methods of developing these skills as determined by college departments.

ATTACHMENT

Howard S. Barrows of the School of Medicine of Southern Illinois differentiates between the case-study method and the problem-solving method.

CASE-STUDY

> Although the case method teacher does not directly give information to students but challenges them to present their own thinking, he does provide them with information and direction. The case method teacher does this by responding to students' ideas with counterexamples, absurdities that would result from their ideas, data not explained by their ideas, or by providing them with new facts that will shape their thinking at a critical point. Although the students are required to think and to defend their ideas in the case method, they will usually know from the teacher's responses if they are right or wrong. In the case method, the students are certainly challenged to reason and learn on their own and are not as dependent on the teacher as in more didactic, lecture approaches; but they are not as independent of the teacher as in the facilitatory tutoring method...(p. iii).

PROBLEM-BASED

> In problem-based learning, the problem is usually undertaken first to allow the students to see how far their present knowledge and reasoning skills can take them; to allow them to recognize, within the constraints of the curricular goals they will need to learn, what resources they will need to use to acquire the information needed. In the sequence of problem-based learning, the next small group session occurs after the students have carried out what they deem is appropriate self-directed study and return to the group to apply what they have learned to the task or problem, and then synthesize and evaluate what they have learned....As the group becomes comfortable and adept at the process, the tutor interjects his challenges only when the students may miss a step in the process, seem to be wandering, or are confused. This guidance can be considered **coaching**. As the students progress, the tutor deliberately and progressively withdraws or **fades**, eventually leaving the students on their own (p. 15-16).

5.5 NUMERACY FOCUS GROUP

5.5.1 SKILLS

The numeracy focus has not yet come up with a description of skills. It has, however, come up with a list of mechanical skills that it believes should be part of the generic description. Those skills are:

- *calculating: ratio-proportions, percentages, fractions, decimals
- *estimating
- *using calculators (basic -understanding the order of operation
- *graphing
- *measuring
- *basic geometry
- *manipulating formulae
- *converting

5.5.2 IMPLEMENTATION

The group has not yet addressed the issue of implementation.

6.0 WORK TO ACCOMPLISH

Each of the focus groups must finalize its description of the graduate and implementation recommendations for a presentation to the entire Generic Skills Subcommittee on May 10, 1993. Those presentations will take place in a day long retreat at 300 Adelaide. The work of the focus groups and the comments of the subcommittee will be passed on in a Retreat Report to the General Education Task Force by the end of the semester. The Subcommittee may also direct further work in the generic skills areas either at the focus group or subcommittee level.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The five focus groups working on computer literacy, interpersonal skills, communication skills, analytical skills (including critical thinking and problem solving) and numeracy have developed provisional descriptions for the graduate. These descriptions will be refined or, in some cases, rewritten.

The main result of the first month of discussions was to raise a number of challenging questions that are not easily resolved. It is also became clear that many of the generic skills converge on certain points. Critical thinking and intrapersonal/interpersonal skills, for example, both involve a process of an interior examination of values and assumptions. Clear communication skills, to present another example, is not possible without coherent thought. Computer literacy is also an exercise of clear thinking where the results of illogical decisions are immediately made apparent. Many other points of convergence will emerge. It is thus not difficult to imagine activities or experiences that could develop several of the generic skills at the same time. Teaching methodologies like the problem-based and case-study approaches are mechanisms by which several skills could be embedded and developed within the disciplines. The question that the focus groups need to answer first, however, is not what implementation will look like but rather what do we want to implement. The question is essentially one of degree. Is an acceptable generic skill level one that is reached by remediation, or is it one that presupposes the college is taking students beyond the ideal high school level? If we set higher levels, how do we work in necessary remediation and move the students to those higher standards? How do we describe what we, as a post-secondary institution, are about? The focus groups have been working their way through the maze of conflicting perspectives in search of some sort of consensus.

The second month of discussions began to shift to recommendations for implementation. Two common themes developed. The first was that the total college environment should foster the CSAC determined generic skills. This recommendation means that students should have access to resources centres at George Brown campuses. It also means professional development opportunities for professors. The second common theme was the need for a permanent generic skills council with a broad membership from across the college to assist departments and programs to develop the generic skills in various ways.

A final word of thanks must be given to the many people who have been so generous with their time. The discussions are fascinating. They also take time and commitment. That so many faculty and administrative personnel have been kind enough to give this time and commitment has enriched the process.